COLLECTED POEMS

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS

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COLLECTED POEMS

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By Mrs F. W. H. Myers.

F. W. H. Myers

COLLECTED POEMS

WITH AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL FRAGMENTS

BY

FREDERIC W. H. MYERS

EDITED BY HIS WIFE

EVELEEN MYERS

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1921

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PREFACE

This volume contains all my husband's published poetry, here collected for the first time. I have included a few very early poems written by him while still a schoolboy, and I have reprinted in full *Saint Paul*, the poems from the volume entitled *The Renewal of Youth*, and the poems from *Fragments of Prose and Poetry*. I have also included a considerable portion of the short autobiography which appeared in this last volume.

I have reprinted it here, as it seems to me to form a far more fitting Preface to the Poems than any I could hope to write.

The essays on Shelley and on Edgar Allan Poe and the letter on Tennyson have never yet been included in any edition of my husband's works.

I am greatly indebted to Lord Tennyson for allowing me to reprint the letter which appeared in his Life of his father, and to Messrs. Macmillan for permission to reprint the essay on Shelley from *The English Poets*. The autobiographical fragment and some of the poems are reprinted by kind permission of Messrs. Longmans, and I would take this opportunity of thanking Mr. E. M. Oakeley for allowing me to include his interesting letter.

EVELEEN MYERS.

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Portrait . . . . . *Frontispiece*

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL FRAGMENT

I BELIEVE that we live after earthly death, and that some of those who read these posthumous confidences may be among my companions in an unseen world. It is for this reason that I now address them. I wish to attract their attention and sympathy; I wish to lead men and women of like interests but of higher nature than my own to regard me as a friend whose companionship they will seek when they too have made their journey to the unknown home. I am tempted, of course, to try to make myself appear worthy of love and respect. But I am kept in check by another belief. I hold that all things thought and felt, as well as all things done, are somehow photographed imperishably upon the Universe, and that my whole past will probably lie open to those with whom I have to do. Repugnant though this thought is to me, I am bound to face it. I realise that a too great discrepancy between my account of myself and the actual facts would, when detected, provoke disgust and contempt. This unusual check, I say, I strongly feel; but my readers must estimate for themselves how far even such a check can be relied upon to counteract a man's tendency to paint himself in too bright a hue.

In one minor point, at least, I can be sincere, at the cost of exciting the distaste of severer critics.

I can tell my story in my own style ; I can give my impressions as they veritably come to me, without translating them into the language of a scientific memoir. The reader need not suppose that I expect his admiration. But if he on his part be psychologically minded, he will prefer that idiosyncrasy should not be concealed. If he is to be interested at all, it must be in the spectacle of a man of sensuous and emotional temperament, urged and driven by his own personal passion into undertaking a scientific enterprise, which aims at the common weal of men. This fusion of a minor poet and an amateur *savant* may not sound promising ; but new crises make new needs ; and what has been accomplished did in fact demand—among many nobler qualities contributed by better men—that importunate and overmastering impulse which none can more fiercely feel than I.

For it has been my lot to be concerned in a work more important and more successful than anything in my own capacity or character could have led me to expect. I have been one of the central group concerned in a great endeavour—the endeavour to pierce, by scientific methods, the world-old, never-penetrated veil. The movement which took overt shape in 1882, with the formation of the Society for Psychical Research, was aided indeed by help from other quarters, but in its essential character was the conception of a few minds, and was piloted through its early dangers by a small group of intimate friends. With this endeavour to learn the actual truth as to the destiny of man I have from the very first been identified and, so to say, incorporate. Edmund Gurney worked at the task with more conscientious energy ; the Sidgwicks with more unselfish wisdom ; but no

one more unreservedly than myself has staked his all upon that distant and growing hope.

I must begin—if only as a psychologist—with a few words on my descent. My paternal grandfather, Thomas Myers, LL.D., author of two ponderous folios on Geography, was the son of Robert Myers, of Hovingham, near York. The name is old-established in the West Riding of Yorkshire ; and there is no reason to suppose that it indicates Jewish descent. My paternal grandmother, Anna Maria Hale, was of good Irish family ; her fifth ancestor, a certain Sir W. Gilbert, of Kilminchy, who died in 1654 and left a large family, enlivening her pedigree with very varied alliances. Her great-grandfather was the Rev. Dr. John Hale, " Rector, Chancellor, and Treasurer of Dromore." My father, the Rev. Frederic Myers, was the second son of Thomas Myers, his elder brother, Thomas, being also in orders.

My maternal grandfather, John Marshall, of Headingly, Leeds, and of Hallsteads, Cumberland, M.P. for Yorkshire before the Reform Bill of 1832, and founder of the flax manufacture at Leeds, was a man of high character and of much note in his day. He, as well as my maternal grandmother, a Pollard, was descended from Yorkshire families of old standing, but varied fortunes. Jeremiah Marshall purchased Low Hall, near Halifax, in 1684—just about the time when William Pollard inherited an estate at Wyke, near Bradford ; and the two families (already interlinked through Leaches and Garths) met in 1795 in a happy marriage, from which were born five sons and six daughters. Three of the sons sat in Parliament ; of the daughters one died unmarried ; the others married the first Lord Monteagle, Dr.

Whewell (Master of Trinity College, Cambridge), Colonel Temple, the Rev. Henry Venn Elliott, and the Rev. Frederic Myers.

Whatever qualities inhere in Yorkshire squires and yeomen I certainly ought to possess. Yet neither in body nor in mind do I closely resemble any ancestor of whom account remains. My mother's strong love of poetry and of natural scenery—her family were among Wordsworth's most appreciative friends—has descended to me; and the deep religious feeling of both my parents shows itself, perhaps, in my own less simple-hearted, less high-minded, but not less eager preoccupation with unseen things.

My father (of whom, as well as of my grandfather, an account will be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography*) was a clergyman who both in active philanthropy and in speculative freedom was in advance of his generation. His main work, *Catholic Thoughts*, was in his lifetime only privately printed, owing to his fear of disturbing the faith of others. It was published some thirty years after it was written—and *then* was regarded as on the whole conservative, and was found elevating and strengthening by many minds. Among my father's friends were Dr. Jowett, Arthur Stanley (afterwards Dean of Westminster), Frederick W. Robertson of Brighton, Dr. Harvey Goodwin (afterwards Bishop of Carlisle), and others of like stamp. He became incumbent of St. John's, Keswick, Cumberland, in 1838, and there I was born on February 6, 1843.

It was in the garden of that fair parsonage that my conscious life began. *Ver illud erat.* The memories of those years swim and sparkle in a haze of light and dew. The thought of Paradise is

interwoven for me with that garden's glory ; with the fresh brightness of a great clump and tangle of blush roses which hung above my head like a fairy forest, and made magical with their fragrance the sunny inlets of the lawn. And even with that earliest gaze is mingled the memory of that vast background of lake and mountain ; where Skiddaw —*οὐμὸς Κιθαιρών*—hid his shoulders among the clouds, while through them his head towered to heaven ; and Causey Pike and Catbells, with the vale of Newlands between them, guarded that winding avenue into things unknown—as it were the limitary parapet and enchanted portal of the world. Close to the Parsonage is Castlelet, a little hill from which Derwentwater is seen outspread, with Borrowdale in the distance. I can recall the days when that prospect was still one of mysterious glory ; when gleaming lake and wooded islands showed a broad radiance bossed with gloom, and purple Borrowdale wore a visionary majesty on which I dared scarcely look too long.

From this setting stand out my first marked grief, my first startling joy—each of them predictive of much to follow. The first grief which I remember came from the sight of a dead mole, which had been crushed by a cart-wheel in the Borrowdale road. Deeply moved I hurried back to my mother, and asked her whether the little mole had gone to Heaven. Gently and lovingly but without doubt she told me the little mole had no soul, and would not live again. To this day I remember my rush of tears at the thought of that furry innocent creature, crushed by a danger which I fancied it too blind to see, and losing all joy for ever by that unmerited stroke. The pity of it ! the pity of

it ! and the first horror of a death without resurrection rose in my bursting heart.

My mother attests the accuracy of this recollection. In the next instance she recalls the facts, although my feelings were not spoken.

On my sixth birthday my father began to teach me Latin ; and a few months later he gave me the First Aeneid of Virgil with an interlinear translation. The scene is stamped upon my mind : the ante-room at the Parsonage with its floor of bright matting, and its glass doors into the garden, through which the flooding sunlight came, while I pored over the new revelation with awe-struck joy :—

Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine laeso.

I can recall the reverent emotion with which I hung on the rhythm of that majestic line. The invocation of the Muse came to me as absolutely real and new ; and the *quo numine laeso* suggested mysteries of divinity on which I dimly feared to dwell. Not Aeneas himself felt his own piety with such emotion as I felt that *insignem pietate virum* ; but the task of carrying gods into Latium, and especially the keeping of Juno's carriage at Carthage, were incomprehensible by my childish Christianity.

I had a second shock of pain at seven or eight years old. My mother, who shrank from dwelling on the hideous doctrine of hell, suggested to me that perhaps men who led bad lives on earth were annihilated at death. The idea that such a fate should be possible for any man seemed to me appalling. I remember where I stood at the moment, and how my brain reeled under the shock. Strangely enough, much as I loved my father, and deeply as I was moved by his death-bed words, his

death gave me no such anguish as this merely speculative suggestion.

My father died at the age of forty, in 1851, and left me and my two younger brothers to a mother who made our welfare the absorbing interest of her life. Her character was such as in each age in turn is attributed to "the old school,"—a character of strong but controlled affections, of clear intelligence, unflinching uprightness, profound religious conviction. Our debt to her is as great as that of sons to a mother can be. She wished to keep her sons with her, and in 1856 went to live at Cheltenham, that we might attend Cheltenham College, at that time almost the only public school at which day-boys were not despised.

At sixteen I was sent on, first to a classical, then to a mathematical tutor, and at seventeen (far too early) I went up to Trinity College, Cambridge.

Elected Fellow, and Classical Lecturer of Trinity, in 1865, I resigned my lectureship in 1869, for the purpose of helping to start the new movement for the Higher Education of Women. In 1871 I accepted the temporary post of Inspector of Returns under the Education Department, and in 1872 I became a permanent Inspector of Schools. After inspecting in several London and country districts, I was appointed to the Cambridge district in 1875, and at the time of writing I still hold that post.

On March 13th, 1880, I was married by Dean Stanley—an old friend of my father's—in Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster Abbey, to Eveleen, youngest daughter of the late Charles Tennant, of Cadoxton, Neath, Glamorganshire, and Mrs. Tennant, daughter of Admiral Collier. In 1881 we took up our abode in Leckhampton House, built by me on the western edge of Cambridge, and there three

children were born to us. Thus much for the external events of a life which owes such interest as it possesses to action and passion of a more inward kind.

That early burst of admiration for Virgil of which I have already spoken was followed by a growing passion for one after another of the Greek and Latin poets. From ten to sixteen I lived much in the inward recital of Homer, Aeschylus, Lucretius, Horace, and Ovid. The reading of Plato's *Gorgias* at fourteen was a great event ; but the study of the *Phaedo* at sixteen effected upon me a kind of conversion. At that time, too, I returned to my worship of Virgil, whom Homer had for some years thrust into the background. I gradually wrote out *Bucolics*, *Georgics*, *Aeneid*, from memory ; and felt, as I have felt ever since, that of all minds known to me it is Virgil's of which I am the most intimate and adoring disciple.

Plato, Virgil, Marcus Antoninus;—these, to speak summarily, are the three great religious teachers of Graeco-Roman antiquity ; and the teaching of Plato and that of Virgil are in the main identical. Other pathways have now led me to something like the creed which they foresaw ; but it is still, and more than ever, the support of my life.

The discovery at seventeen, in an old schoolbook, of the poems of Sappho, whom till then I had only known by name, brought an access of intoxicating joy. Later on, the solitary deciphering of Pindar made another epoch of the same kind. From the age of sixteen to twenty-three there was no influence in my life comparable to *Hellenism* in the fullest sense of that word. That tone of thought came to me naturally ; the classics were but in-

tensifications of my own being. They drew from me and fostered evil as well as good; they might aid imaginative impulse and detachment from sordid interests, but they had no check for pride.

When pushed thus far, the "Passion of the Past" must needs wear away sooner or later into an unsatisfied pain. In 1864 I travelled in Greece. I was mainly alone; nor were the traveller's facts and feelings mapped out for him then as now. Ignorant as I was, according to modern standards, yet my emotions were all my own; and few men can have drunk that departed loveliness into a more passionate heart. It was the life of about the sixth century before Christ, on the isles of the Aegean, which drew me most—that intensest and most unconscious bloom of the Hellenic spirit. Here alone in the Greek story do women play their due part with men. What might the Greeks have made of the female sex had they continued to care for it! Then it was that Mimnermus sang:

Τίς δὲ βιός, τί δὲ τερπνὸν ἄνευ χρυσέης Ἀφροδίτης;
τεθναίην, ὅτε μοι μηκέτι ταῦτα μέλοι.

Then it was that Praxilla's cry rang out across the narrow seas, that call to fellowship, reckless and lovely with stirring joy. "Drink with me!" she cried, "be young along with me! Love with me! wear with me the garland crown! Mad be thou with my madness; be wise when I am wise!"

I looked through my open porthole close upon the Lesbian shore. There rose the heathery promontories, and waves lapped upon those rocks where Sappho's feet had trodden; broke beneath the heather on which had sat that girl unknown, nearness to whom made a man the equal of the gods. I sat in Mytilene, to me a sacred city, between the

hill-crest and the sunny bay. I climbed to the summit of Syra—

> More like a man
> Flying from something that he feared, than one
> Who sought the thing he loved.

For, gazing thence on Delos and on the Cyclades, and on those straits and channels of purple sea, I felt that nowise could I come closer still ; never more intimately than thus could embrace that vanished beauty. Alas for an ideal which roots itself in the past ! That longing cannot be allayed ; it feels "the insatiability which attends all unnatural passions as their inevitable punishment." For it is an unnatural passion; the world rolls onward, not backward, and men must set their hearts on what lies before.

I left Greece with such a sadness as I have known in some twilight sculpture-gallery, when I have pressed my face for the last time to the unanswering marble, and turned to go with eyes tear-brimming, and a bitter-sweet passion of regret.

The vanishing of the Hellenic ideal left me cold and lonely. I travelled in America in 1865, and during that time alone in my life felt a numb indifference to both past and future. One scene comes back to me with vivid insight into a state of mind which for the most part I have observed only from the outside.

Visiting Niagara alone, I resolved to swim across the river immediately below the falls, in the track where boats cross with ease, before the turmoil of the river collects itself for the rapids below. This was before any of the professional exploits in swimming Niagara ; and my proposed swim, which would of course be thought nothing of now, had

seldom if ever been attempted, so far as I could learn, except by deserters from the Canadian shore, some of whom were said to have been swept down and drowned in the whirlpool. There was thus some imaginative sense of danger; though it was plain that where a rowing-boat with one oarsman could ply, an ordinary swimmer ought to be able to make his way also. I started from the Canadian side (August 28th, 1865) late at night, to avoid spectators, and alone, except for a man following with my clothes in a boat. As I stood on a rock, choosing my place to plunge into the boiling whiteness, I asked myself with urgency, "What if I die?" For once the answer was blank of emotion. I have often looked back on this apathy in the brief interspace of religions as my only subjective key to the indifference which I observe in so many of mankind. I plunged in; the cliffs, the cataract, the moon herself, were hidden in a tower of whirling spray; in the foamy rush I struck at air; waves from all sides beat me to and fro; I seemed immersed in thundering chaos, alone amid the roar of doom.

I emerged on the American side, and looked back on the tossing gulf. May death, I dimly thought, be such a transit, terrifying but easy, and leading to nothing new! *Caelum non animum mutant* may be true of that change as well.

It was soon after my return to England that I underwent the new conversion which in my then state was sure to overtake me. I had been piously brought up, and although I had long neglected, had never actually cast off the Christian faith. But I had never as yet realised that faith in its emotional fulness; I had been "converted" by the *Phaedo*, and not by the Gospel. Christian conversion now came to me in a potent form—through the agency

of Josephine Butler, *née* Grey, whose name will not be forgotten in the annals of English philanthropy. She introduced me to Christianity, so to say, by an inner door; not to its encumbering forms and dogmas, but to its heart of fire.

My poems of "St. Paul" and "St. John the Baptist," intensely personal in their emotion, may serve as sufficient record of those years of eager faith.

That faith looks to me now like a mistaken short-cut in the course of a toilsome way. But it brought with it much of elevating emotion—much which survived the disappearance of the definite creed which gave it birth.

There is no need to retrace the steps of gradual disillusion. This came to me, as to many others, from increased knowledge of history and of science, from a wider outlook on the world. Sad it was, and slow; a recognition of insufficiency of evidence, fraught with growing pain. Insensibly the celestial vision faded, and left me to

> pale despair and cold tranquillity,
> Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
> Birth and the grave, that are not as they were.

The process of disillusionment, I say, was slow; and in its course I passed through various moods of philosophical or emotional hope, which are reflected in "The Implicit Promise of Immortality," the "Ode to Nature," "Ammergau," and other poems written 1869–73. These hopes faded likewise from lack of evidence, and left me to an agnosticism or virtual materialism which sometimes was a dull pain borne with joyless doggedness, sometimes flashed into a horror of reality that made the world spin before

one's eyes—a shock of nightmare-panic amid the glaring dreariness of day. It was the hope of the whole world which was vanishing, not mine alone.

And in those days, when my own hope ran lowest, my zeal for other men ran lowest too. What could be done for them of more than momentary avail? In spite of earthly advantages—even by reason (as I deemed) of superior insight—I suffered more than they; was it not best for "the dim common populations" not to feel and not to know? In that foreseen futility of the life of individual and race, sympathy itself seemed a childish trifling with the universal despair.

> O sighs that strongly from my bosom flew!
> O heart's oblation sacrificed anew!
> O groans and tears of all men and of mine!
> O many midnights prostrate and supine,
> Unbearable and profitless, and spent
> For the empty furtherance of a vain intent—
> From God or Nothingness, from Heaven or Hell,
> To wrest the secret that they will not tell,
> To grasp a life beyond life's shrinking span
> And learn at last the chief concerns of man!

An entry in my diary for November 13th, 1871, "H. S. on ghosts," indicates the first turning of my spirit towards the possible attainment, with Henry Sidgwick's aid, of a scientific assurance of unseen things. This last clue was destined to be followed far; nor could I have found a more sympathetic yet cautious guide.

The first scene in the long struggle consisted in the slow growth of resolve within me to spend all life's energy in beating against the walls of the prison-house, in case a panel anywhere might yield. To these wild hopes Sidgwick replied with modified

encouragement. It was possible, he thought, that where the German had been satisfied with embracing the cloud—where the Frenchman's logic had lightly accepted negation—the dogged Anglo-Saxon might yet wrest some secret from silent Fate. "I will not let thee go until thou bless me!"—so cried I in spirit to that unanswering Shade; "until at least thou show me some glimmer of thy countenance, and eyes that live behind thy veil."

Yet I had at first great repugnance to studying the phenomena alleged by Spiritualists;—to re-entering by the scullery window the heavenly mansion out of which I had been kicked through the front door. It was not until the autumn of 1873 that I came across my first personal experience of forces unknown to science. I shall not, in this story of inward feelings, recount the special phenomena which impressed me. What I have to say on evidential points has been said elsewhere. Enough that I had discovered a hidden portal which might be pushed backwards upon an open way. *Limen erat, caecaeque fores*;—there was at last an adit into the Unseen. I know not whether at any other moment, or to any other man, this new hope could have come more overwhelmingly. It must be remembered that this was the very flood-tide of materialism, agnosticism—the mechanical theory of the Universe, the reduction of spiritual facts to physiological phenomena. It was a time when not the intellect only, but the moral ideals of men seemed to have passed into the camp of negation. We were all in the first flush of triumphant Darwinism, when terrene evolution had explained so much that men hardly cared to look beyond. Among my own group, W. K. Clifford was putting forth his series of triumphant proclamations of the

nothingness of God, the divinity of man. Swinburne, too, in "The Pilgrims," had given passionate voice to the same conception. Frederic Harrison, whom I knew well, was still glorifying Humanity as the only Divine. And behind these exultant pioneers was a rearguard of steadier and sadder thought. George Eliot—on whose deep moral impressiveness I have dwelt elsewhere—strenuously rejected all prospect save in the mere terrene performance of duty to our human kin. And others, —all, it seemed, to whom I could look for wisdom, —maintained a significant silence, or fed with vague philosophisings an uncertain hope.

At George Eliot's Sunday receptions I now would sit in strange confusion of mind. I heard the eager talk, the race of intellectual novelties which so recently had seemed to myself also to range over all the field which fate allowed to men. But now I felt a knowledge almost greater than I could bear; a knowledge beside which the last experiment of the biologist, the last speculation of the philosopher, seemed trifling as the sport of a child; and yet a knowledge which none would receive from me, an answer to which none cared to listen, although the riddle was at the heart of all.

Life, indeed, was still for my own soul confused and tossing, but the world's wider confusion seemed narrowing to a more definite issue. If there were indeed a progressive immortality, then were the known evil of the Universe so slight in proportion to infinity that one might trust in a possible explanation which should satisfy every soul. But if there were nothing after death, then no argument could reconcile the moral sense to the fact that so many innocent creatures were born to unmerited and unrequited pain.

Closing here for the present this brief story of my inner life, I am bound to face one searching question. My history has been that of a soul struggling into the conviction of its own existence, postponing all else to the one question whether life and love survive the tomb. That conviction has at last been granted to me. How far has it proved an inspiring, a controlling creed? How has it compared with other creeds, or absence of creed,—with Hellenism, Agnosticism, Christianity?

As years advance one must needs lose the early confidence in the possibilities of one's own moral progress. For me at least the walls of my earthly nature seem closing in. Nor can I believe that under any circumstances, with any stimulus, I could have become a being such as those whom I have most admired and loved. But although my character is ill-fitted to illustrate the merits of any form of religion, it is well fitted to bring out that religion's defects. I am not likely to be a better man than my creed gives me logical reason for being.

The Hellenism of my early years was an intellectual stimulus, but in no way a moral control. Entirely congenial to my temperament, it urged me onwards (as I have said) into intellectual freedom and emotional vividness, but exercised no check upon pride. Hellenism is the affirmation of the will to live—but with no projection of the desired life into any juster or sterner world.

The effect of Agnosticism upon me was wholly evil. During this phase only can I remember anything of deadness and bitterness;—of scorn of human life, of anger at destiny, of deliberate preference of the pleasures of the passing hour.

Christianity, while it could last, was enough. Its drawback was the growing sense of unreality, of

insufficiency ; the need of an inward make-believe. The Christian scheme is not cosmical ; and this defect is felt so soon as one learns to look upon the Universe with broad impersonal questioning, to gaze onward beyond the problem of one's own salvation to the mighty structural laws on which the goodness or badness of the Cosmos must in the last resort depend.

Yet I cannot in any deep sense *contrast* my present creed with Christianity. Rather I regard it as a scientific development of the attitude and teaching of Christ.

I look upon Christ as a Revealer of immortality absolutely unique, as the incomparable Pioneer of all wisdom that shall be learnt concerning unseen things. But, like the Norseman's discovery of America, his work grows more and more remote, and there are no sure sea-marks for others to follow along that legendary way. A new discovery is needed—to be made by no single Columbus, but by the whole set and strain of humanity ; by the devotion of a world-wide labour to the deciphering of that open secret which has baffled the too hasty or too self-centred wonder and wish of men. And such an inquiry must be in the first instance a scientific, and only in the second instance a religious one. Religion, in its most permanent sense, is the adjustment of our emotions to the structure of the Universe ; and what we now most need is to discover what that cosmic structure is.

I believe, then, that Science is now succeeding in penetrating certain cosmical facts which she has not reached till now. The first, of course, is the fact of man's survival of death.

The second is the registration in the Universe of every past scene and thought. This I hold to be

indicated by the observed facts of clairvoyance and retrocognition, and to be in itself probable as a mere extension of telepathy, which, when acting unrestrictedly, may render it impossible for us to appear as other than we are. And upon this the rule of like to like seems to follow ; our true affinities must determine our companionships in a spiritual world.

And finally, extending to that world the widest law thus far found applicable to the world we know, I believe in a progressive moral evolution, no longer truncated by physical catastrophes, but moving continuously towards an infinitely distant goal. This short creed, I think, is all that existing evidence warrants, and is enough for the needs of life. It proves to me that it is to my interest to live at my best ; it inspires the very strongest hopes which can excite to exertion. On many men, I feel sure, it will exercise a more striking effect. And be it noted that whatever effect this creed does exercise it will exercise inexorably and persistently—with the inexorable persistence of known and permanent fact. Nay, since there is this *reality* in the creed, it will be most powerful in those profoundest crises when any inward uncertainty of belief leaves the victory to the passions of men. I have myself thus found that in strenuous need the efficacy of my belief has become not less but greater.

I have been speaking as though these convictions admitted of no doubt. And I believe that they will attain such certitude in the minds of coming men. But my own career has been a long struggle to seize and hold the actual truth amid illusion and fraud. I have been mocked with many a mirage, caught in many a Sargasso Sea. For there has been this of unique about my own position, that from no conceit of my own capacity, but in the bitter need

of truth, in the manifest dearth of allies and teachers, I have felt that I must absolutely form my own judgment as to man's survival; must decide from facts known to myself—known hardly to any others, or interpreted by those others in some different way. I could not attach much importance to any opinions except those of the Sidgwicks and Edmund Gurney. Who else knew what was to be known—in its strength and its weakness?

I had therefore often a sense of great solitude, and of an effort beyond my strength; "striving"—as Homer says of Odysseus in a line which I should wish graven on some tablet in my memory—"striving to save my own soul, and my comrades' homeward way."

'Αρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχήν καὶ νόστον ἑταίρων.

I am well aware that my temper is in disaccord with that of Buddha, of Cleanthes, of Marcus Antoninus. This "passionate affirmation of the will to live," as Schopenhauer would call it, which makes the essence of my being, seems far from that lofty resignation which subordinates all thoughts of a personal future to the welfare of the Universe as a whole.

I might reply that my private temper differs because my cosmical outlook differs; because I see that the only hope for the Universe lies in that very thing which makes the only hope for me. The Universe cannot advance to moral glory over the crushing of individual hearts.

Yet I know that there is a difference more personal than this; I know that my nature imperatively craves what the nature of Marcus Antoninus did not crave—a personal, an unbounded, an endless career of life and joy.

Yes, and I believe, as against all Stoic and Buddhist creeds, that this temper of mine, however much of chastening it still may need, may yet be that which best subserves the cosmic aim, which helps the Universe in its passage and evolution into fuller and higher life. To be purged, not dulled, is what we need ; to intensify each his own being, a pulse of the existence of the All.

We need, as I have elsewhere said, a summons "to no Houri-haunted paradise, no passionless contemplation, no monotony of prayer and praise ; but to endless advance by endless effort, and, if need be, by endless pain." Be it mine, then, to plunge among the unknown Destinies, to dare and still to dare !

Meantime the background of Eternity shows steadfast through all the pageants of the shifting world. This gives majesty to solitary landscapes, and to the vault of night ; it urges me to go out and be alone ; to pace in starlight the solemn avenues, and to gaze upon Arcturus with his sons.

ON A SPRING MORNING AT SEA

And such a sight as this is, I suppose,
Shall meet thee on the morrow of thy death ;
And pearl to sapphire, opal into rose
Melt in that morn no heart imagineth ;—
Fair as when now thine eyes thou dar'st not close
Lest the whole joy go from thee at a breath,
And the sea's silence and the heaven's repose
Evanish as a dream evanisheth.
Ay, *there* some jewelled visionary spring
Shall charm the strange shore and the glassy sea ;
And from thee o'er some lucid ocean-ring
Thy phantom Past shall in a shadow flee ;
And thou be in the Spirit, and everything
Born in the God that shall be born in thee.

And now let my last word be of reverent gratitude to the Unimaginable Cause of all ; to whom my thanks ascend in ancient and solemn language, fuller, surely, of meaning now than ever heretofore throughout the whole story of the desires of men :—

The king shall rejoice in Thy strength, O Lord : exceeding glad shall he be of Thy salvation :
For Thou hast given him his heart's desire ; and hast not denied him the request of his lips :
He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest him a long life : even for ever and ever.

F. W. H. MYERS.

[It may not be out of place to quote here a brief extract from a letter of Henry Sidgwick's, which reveals the depth of affection existing between those two friends and fellow-workers.]

. . . For many years Frederic Myers has been as dear to me as the dearest of brothers—there is no one so qualified to enrich and make brighter and nobler the lives of those he loves.

Even before we were close friends I had the keenest admiration for his poetic genius ; but he is better than his genius—or rather it manifests only one part of what makes him lovable. One might guess from his poetry the ardour and depth and fulness of his feeling, and his sensitiveness to all things fair and great and high ; but the unwavering loyalty and tender observant sympathy that I have had from him in a friendship that has been without the smallest cloud from the first beginning—that can only be shown in life and not in verse.—Always your sincere friend,

HENRY SIDGWICK.

[The following essay appeared in *The English Poets*, edited by T. H. Ward.]

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

THE title of "the poets' poet," which has been bestowed for various reasons on very different authors, applies perhaps with a truer fitness to Shelley than to any of the rest. For all students of Shelley must in a manner feel that they have before them an extreme, almost an extravagant, specimen of the poetic character; and the enthusiastic love, or contemptuous aversion, which his works have inspired has depended mainly on the reader's sympathy or distaste for that character when exhibited in its unmixed intensity.

Considered as a link in the chain of English literature, Shelley's poetry is of less importance than we might expect. It is not closely affiliated to the work of any preceding school, nor, with one or two brilliant exceptions, has it modified subsequent poetry in any conspicuous way. It is no doubt true that Shelley, belonging to that group of poets whose genius was awakened by the stirring years which ushered in this century, shows traces of the influence of more than one contemporary. There are echoes of Wordsworth in *Alastor*, echoes of Moore in the lyrics, echoes even of Byron in the later poems. But, with the possible exception of Wordsworth, whose fresh revelation of Nature supplied poetic nutriment even to minds quite alien from his own, none of these can be said to have perceptibly modified either the substance or the style of Shelley's works as a whole.

I will not dwell at length here on the special characteristics of each of his poems in order. They

show indeed much apparent diversity both of form and content. *Alastor* is the early reflection of the dreamy and solitary side of its author's nature. *The Revolt of Islam* embodies in a fantastic tale the poet's eager rebellion against the cruelties and oppressions of the world. In *Prometheus Unbound* these two strains mingle in their highest intensity. The drama of *The Cenci* shows Shelley's power of dealing objectively with the thoughts and passions of natures other than his own. *Adonais*, his elegy on the death of Keats, is the most carefully finished, and the most generally popular, of his longer pieces. And in the songs and odes which he poured forth during his last years, his genius, essentially lyrical, found its most unmixed and spontaneous expression. But in fact the forms which Shelley's poems assumed, or the occasions which gave them birth, are not the points on which it is most important to linger. It is in " the one Spirit's plastic stress " which pervades them all—in the exciting and elevating quality which all in common possess—that the strange potency of Shelley lies.

For although the directly traceable instances of this great poet's influence on the style of his successors may be few or unimportant, it by no means follows that the impression left by his personality has been small. On the contrary, it has, I believe, been deeply felt by most of those who since his day have had any share of poetic sensibility as at once an explanation and a justification of the points in which they feel themselves different from the mass of mankind. His character and his story—more chequered and romantic than Wordsworth's, purer and loftier than Byron's—are such as to call forth in men of ardent and poetic temper the maximum at once of sympathetic pity and sympathetic triumph.

For such men are apt to feel that they have a controversy with the world. Their virtue—because it is original rather than reflected—because it rests on impulse rather than on tradition—seems too often to be counted for nothing at all by those whose highest achievement is to walk mechanically along the ancient ways. Their eagerness to face the reality of things, without some touch of which religion is but a cajoling dream, is denounced as heresy or atheism. Their enthusiasm for ideal beauty, without some touch of which love is but a selfish instinct, is referred to the promptings of a less dignified passion. The very name of their master Plato is vulgarised into an easy sneer. And nevertheless the wisest among them perceive that all this must be, and is better thus. The world must be arranged to suit the ordinary man, for though the man of genius is more capable of being *pained*, the ordinary man is more likely to be really *injured* by surroundings unfitted for his development. In society, as in nature, the tests which any exceptional variation has to encounter should be prompt and severe. It is better that poets should be

> Cradled into poesy by wrong,
> And learn in suffering what they teach in song,

than that a door should be opened to those who are the shadow of that of which the poet is the reality,—who are only sentimental, only revolutionary, only uncontrolled. It is better that the world should persecute a Shelley than that it should endure a St. Just.

But in whatever mood the man of poetic temper may contemplate his own relation to society, he will be tempted to dwell upon, even to idealise, the character and achievements of Shelley. Perhaps he is dreaming, as many men have innocently dreamt

who had not strength enough to make their dream come true, of the delight of justifying what the world calls restless indolence by some apparition of unlooked-for power ; of revealing the central force of self-control which has guided those eager impulses along an ordered way,—

> As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
> The unquiet republic of the maze
> Of Planets struggling fierce toward Heaven's free wilderness,—

of giving, in short, to motives misconstrued and character maligned the noble vindication of some work whose sincerity and virtue enshrine it in the heart of a great people. In such a mood he will turn proudly to Shelley as to one who knew to the uttermost the poet's sorrow, and has received the poet's reward ; one who, assailed by obloquy, misjudged, abandoned, and accursed, replied by strains which have become a part of the highest moments of all after generations, an element (if I may be allowed the expression) in the religion of mankind.

Or if the mood in which the lover of poetry turns to Shelley be merely one in which that true world in which he fain would dwell seems in danger of fading into a remote unreality amid the gross and pressing cares of every day, he will still be tempted to cling to and magnify the poet of *Prometheus Unbound*, because he offers so uncompromising a testimony to the validity of the poetic vision, because he carries, as it were, the accredited message of a dweller among unspeakable things.

We need not therefore wonder if among poets and imaginative critics we find the worship of Shelley carried to an extraordinary height. I quote

as a specimen some words of a living poet himself closely akin to Shelley in the character of his genius: "Shelley outsang all poets on record but some two or three throughout all time; his depths and heights of inner and outer music are as divine as nature's, and not sooner exhaustible. He was alone the perfect singing-god; his thoughts, words, deeds, all sang together. . . . The master singer of our modern race and age; the poet beloved above all other poets, being beyond all other poets—in one word, and the only proper word—divine."

The tone of this eulogy presupposes that there will be many readers to agree and to enjoy. And, in fact, the representatives of this school of criticism are now so strong, and their utterance so confident, that the easiest course in treating of Shelley would be simply to accept their general view, and to ignore that opposite opinion which, if not less widely held, finds at any rate less eloquent exposition. But it is surely not satisfactory that literary judgments should thus become merely the utterances of the imaginative to the imaginative, of the aesthetic to the aesthetic, that "poetry and criticism," in Pope's words, should be "by no means the universal concern of the world, but only the affair of idle men who write in their closets, and of idle men who read there."

We should surely desire that poetry should become "the universal concern of the world" at least thus far; that those who delight in its deeper mysteries should also be ready to meet plain men on the common ground of plain good sense; should see what they see, listen to what they say, and explain their own superior insight in terms intelligible to all. If clear-headed but unimaginative readers are practically told that the realm of poetry

is a fairy-land which they cannot enter, they will retaliate by calling it a "Cloud-cuckoo-town" built in the air. The sight of our esoteric raptures will only incite them to use the term "poetry" as the antithesis, not of prose, but of common sense and right reason.

And there is much indeed both in matter and style of Shelley's poems to which readers of this uninitiated class are apt to take exception. "We had always supposed," they say—if I may condense many floating criticisms into an argument, as it were, of the *advocatus diaboli* in the case of Shelley's canonisation—"we had always supposed that one main function of poetry, at least, was to irradiate human virtue with its proper, but often hidden, charm; that she depicts to us the inspiring triumph of man's higher over his lower self; that (in Plato's words) 'by adorning ten thousand deeds of men long gone she educates the men that are to be.' But we find Shelley telling us, 'You might as well go to a gin-shop for a leg of mutton as expect anything human or earthly from me.' And his poems bear out this self-criticism. He is indeed fond of painting a golden age of human happiness; but of what does his millennium consist? and how is it attained? In the *Witch of Atlas* it is the fantastic paradise of a child's day-dream, summoned, like the transformation-scene in a pantomime, by the capricious touch of a fairy. In the *Prometheus* an attempt is made to deal more seriously with the sins and sorrows of men. But even there the knot of human destinies is cut and not unravelled; the arbitrary catastrophes of an improvised and chaotic mythology bring about a change in human affairs depending in no way on moral struggle or moral achievement—on which every real change in human

affairs *must* depend—but effected apparently by the simple removal of priests and kings,—of the persons, that is to say, in whom the race, however mistakenly, has hitherto embodied its instincts of reverence and of order. And further,—to illustrate by one striking instance the pervading unreality of Shelley's ideals, —what does Prometheus himself, the vaunted substitute for any other Redeemer, propose to do in this long-expected and culminant hour? He begins at once, 'There is a cave,' and proposes to retire thither straightway with the mysterious Asia, and '*entangle buds and flowers and beams*.' 'Ask for this great Deliverer now, and find him,'—not surely occupied as a Milton or an Aeschylus would have left that bringer of light to men! Nay, so constantly does this idea of a cave-life of beatific seclusion recur in Shelley's mind that it is even left uncertain whether Asia, amid competing offers of the same kind, can obey Prometheus' call. For hardly is *his* description over when Earth in her turn begins, 'There is a cavern,'—and invites the mystic goddess to this alternative retreat. Nor is Asia's choice of caves ended here. For we have already heard of her as occupying with Ione a submarine cavern,—as well as an Indian solitude, styled indeed a *vale*, but differing from the caves above-mentioned in no essential particular. And if this unreality, this aloofness from the real facts of life, pervades Shelley's crowning composition, what are we to say of *Queen Mab* and *The Revolt of Islam*? If we compare their characters and incidents with anything which earth has really to show we should be tempted to argue that their author had never seen a human being. And the one dramatic situation in which Shelley is so strong —the situation which gives tragic intensity alike to

his *Cenci* and his *Prometheus*—hardly assures us of any more searching knowledge of mankind. For it is simply the opposition of absolute wickedness to absolute virtue.

"For the most part, then, Shelley's conception of the actual world seems to us boyish and visionary. Nor, on the other hand, does he offer us much more of wisdom when we desert the actual world for the ideal,—the realm of observation and experience for the realm of conjecture and intuition. We cannot, in fact, discover what he thought on the main spiritual problems which occupy mankind, while in his treatment of the beliefs of others there is often a violent crudity which boyishness can scarcely excuse. Now we do not demand of a poet a definite religion or a definite philosophy. But we are disappointed to find in so much lofty verse so little substance,—nothing, we may almost say, save a few crumbs from the banquet of Plato. The lark who so scorned our earth and heaven might have brought us, we think, some more convincing message from his empyrean air.

"And now as regards his style. We perceive and admit that Shelley's style is unique and inimitable. But it often seems to us inimitable only as Turner's latest pictures are inimitable: the work obviously of a great master, but work so diffused and deflected as to bear quite too remote a relation to the reality of things. We can believe that Shelley's descriptions of natural scenes, for instance, are full of delightful suggestiveness for the imaginative reader. But considered simply as descriptions we cannot admit that they describe. The objects on which our eyes have rested are certainly not so *crystalline* or so *marmoreal*, so *amethystine*, *pellucid*, or *resplendent*, as the objects which meet us in

Shelley's song. Nature never seems to be enough for him as she *is*, and yet we do not think that he has really improved on her.

"Again; we know that it is characteristic of the poetic mind to be fertile in imagery, and to pass from one thought to another by an emotional rather than a logical link of connection. But as regards imagery we think that Shelley might with advantage have remembered Corinna's advice to Pindar in a somewhat similar case,—'to sow with the hand, and not with the whole sack'; while as regards the connection of parts we think that though the poet (like one of his own magic pinnaces) may be in reality impelled by a rushing impulse peculiar to himself, he should nevertheless (like those pinnaces) carry a rag of sail, so that some breath of reason may at least seem to be bearing him along. We are aware that this hurrying spontaneity of style is often cited as a proof of Shelley's wealth of imagination. Yet in desiring from him more concentration, more finish, more self-control, we are not desiring that he should have had less imagination but more; that he should have had the power of renewing his inspiration on the same theme and employing it for the perfection of the same passage, so as to leave us less of melodious incoherence—less of that which is perhaps poetry but is certainly nothing *but* poetry—and more of what the greatest poets have left us, namely, high ideas and noble emotions enshrined in a form so complete and exquisite that the ideas seem to derive a new truth, the emotions a new dignity, from the intensity with which they have existed in those master minds."

Some such words as these will express the thoughts of many men whose opinions we cannot disregard without a risk of weakening, by our literary ex-

clusiveness, the hold of poetry on the mass of mankind. But neither need we admit that such criticisms as these are unanswerable. Some measure of truth they do no doubt contain, and herein we must plead our poet's youth and immaturity as our best reply. That immaturity, as we believe, was lessening with every season that passed over his head. With the exception of *Alastor* (1815)—the first and most pathetic of Shelley's portraits of himself—all his poems that possess much value were written in the last four and a half years of his life (1818–22), and during those years a great, though not a uniform, progress is surely discernible. As his hand gains in cunning we see him retaining all his earliest magic, but also able from time to time to dismiss that excess of individuality which would be mannerism were it less spontaneous. The drama of *Hellas*, the last long poem which he finished, illustrates this irregular advance in power. It is for the most part among the slightest of his compositions, but in its concluding chorus—Shelley's version of the ancient theme, *Alter erit tum Tiphys et altera quae vehat Argo*—we recognise, more plainly perhaps than ever before in his lyrics, that solidity and simplicity of treatment which we associate with classical masterpieces. And the lyrics of the last year of his life are the very crown of all that he has bequeathed. The delight indeed with which we hear them too quickly passes into regret, so plainly do they tell us that we have but looked on the poet's opening blossom ; his full flower and glory have been reserved as a *θέαμα εὐδαιμόνων θεατῶν*, a sight for the blest to see.

But there is much that has been said in Shelley's dispraise to which we shall need to plead no demurrer. We shall admit it ; but in such fashion

that our admission constitutes a different or a higher claim. If we are told of the crudity of his teaching and of his conceptions of life, we answer that what we find in him is neither a code nor a philosophy, but a rarer thing,—an example, namely (as it were in an angel or in a child), of the manner in which the littleness and the crimes of men shock a pure spirit which has never compromised with their ignobility nor been tainted with their decay. And in the one dramatic situation in which Shelley is confessedly so great—the attitude of Beatrice resisting her father, of Prometheus resisting Zeus—we say that we discern the noble image of that courageous and enduring element in the poet himself which gives force to his gentleness and dignity to his innocence, and which through all his errors, his sufferings, his inward and outward storms, leaves us at last with the conviction that "there is nothing which a spirit of such magnitude cannot overcome or undergo."

Again, if we are told of the vagueness or incoherence of Shelley's language, we answer that poetic language must always be a compromise between the things which can definitely be said and the things which the poet fain would say; and that when poet or painter desires to fill us with the sense of the vibrating worlds of spiritual intelligences which interpenetrate the world we see,—of those

> Ten thousand orbs involving and involved, . . .
> Peopled with unimaginable shapes, . . .
> Yet each intertranspicuous,—

it must needs be that the reflection of these transcendent things should come to us in forms that luxuriate into arabesque, in colours that shimmer into iridescence, in speech that kindles into imagery; while yet we can with little doubt discern whether

he who addresses us is merely illuminating the mists of his own mind, or "has beheld" (as Plato has it) "and been initiated into the most blessed of initiations, gazing on simple and imperishable and happy visions in a stainless day."

And, finally, if we are told that, whatever these visions or mysteries may be, Shelley has not revealed them; that he has contributed nothing to the common faith and creed of men,—has only added to their aspiring anthem one keen melodious cry,—we answer that this common religion of all the world advances by many kinds of prophecy, and is spread abroad by the flying flames of pure emotion as well as by the solid incandescence of eternal truth. Some few souls indeed there are—a Plato, a Dante, a Wordsworth—whom we may without extravagance call stars of the spiritual firmament, so sure and lasting seems their testimony to those realities which life hides from us as sunlight hides the depth of heaven. But we affirm that in Shelley too there is a testimony of like kind, though it has less of substance and definition, and seems to float diffused in an ethereal loveliness. We may rather liken him to the dewdrop of his own song, which

> becomes a winged mist
> And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
> Outlives the noon, and in the sun's last ray
> Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

For the hues of sunset also have for us their revelation. We look, and the conviction steals over us that such a spectacle can be no accident in the scheme of things; that the whole universe is tending to beauty; and that the apocalypse of that crimsoned heaven may be not the less authentic because it is so fugitive, not the less real because it comes to us in a fantasy wrought but of light and air.

STANZAS ON SHELLEY

Oh, not like ours that life was born,
No mortal mother Shelley knew,
But kindled by some starry morn
Lit like a snow-flake from the blue;
Saw on some peak the lightnings gleam,
The lingering soft auroras play;
Then foamlike on a leaping stream
Sped downwards to the earthly day.

So keen a wish had winged his flight—
His heart was faint with such desire—
To bear from that supernal light
A Promethèan fount of fire:
His quivering thyrsus flashed with flame,
He sang the spell long learnt above;
With ardent eyes one only name
He named; the mountains echoed
"Love!"

But ah! for men no healing wrought
That spell, that spirit's angel bloom:
Close, close about him frowned and fought
Their words of anger, looks of gloom:

Gloomed overhead the iron reign
Of stifling custom, hates that kill;
From Earth's dark places sighed in vain
Her old immedicable ill.

" And yet methinks one soul might know
The bliss unknown, the tale untold!
One heart might melt in mine, and so
For twain at least the age be gold!"
He called;—and ah! what mortal maid
Had heard unmoved that seraph tongue?
What Daphne lingered in her shade
When that unstained Apollo sung?

But oft in vain shall love be given
When mighty spirits mourn alone;
Too rarely, rarely falls from heaven
A woman-heart to match their own:
He saw his Vision smile in sleep,
And close she seemed, and floated far;
Life-long across life's darkling deep
He chased that image of a star.

Yet, with an Orphic whisper blent,
A Spirit in the west-wind sighs;
Gaze from the conscious firmament
Some God's unfathomable eyes:
He saw, he felt them: " Thou be mine,
As I am thine, thou primal whole!
Ye elements, my life enshrine,
Enfold, entomb me, soul in soul!"

He called; they heard him; high in air
The impetuous Winds came whirling free;
Dashed on his brow, swept through his hair
Untamed caresses of the Sea;
The Fire up-leapt in ardent birth
To her thin substance his to win;
That heart of hearts the dædal Earth,
Her own unfolding, drew therein.

[The following letter on Alfred Lord Tennyson appeared in his *Life* published by his son in 1897.]

You have asked me, knowing well what pleasure the request would give me, to send you a few words, not of formal criticism, but of expression of intimate feeling as to your father's work;—your father, a greater man than whom I have never looked and shall never look upon. You tell me to approach the subject, "not from the side of Plotinus, but from the side of Virgil." I understand what you mean. On your father's prophetic message, as I must deem it, I have already said my say; and the other point at which my sympathy was deepest was in our common veneration for Virgil.

Such veneration is no chance preference or literary idiosyncrasy. Rather it implies the instructed, the comprehending acceptance of a certain ideal of the poetic art. It would be absurd, indeed, to draw up poets in two opposite camps; especially absurd in treating of a poet whom those who best appreciated Romanticism held as romantic, while those who best appreciated Classicism felt him as classic to the core. Yet the words thus used express a real distinction; and it is well to draw out their meaning and to realise how we regard their leading exemplars. In each art, then, we tend to call the type *romantic* when the artist strives above all things to make his work fresh, vivid, interesting; infusing into it individual emotion, interweaving with it the attractiveness of other forms of art;

filling it, as one may say, with the pulse and breath of life. The aim of him whom we call the classical artist is at first sight a narrower one. For his absorbing and primary desire is to carry to its utmost height that innate and inexplicable charm in the relations of sound or line or rhythm or colour which makes the essential principle of his art. When he fails, he degenerates into a *virtuoso*. When he succeeds, he enters in some sort into the hidden heritage of emotion which maintains the life of Art itself; and although his public may sometimes be small, he gives to *cognoscenti* a joy at least as penetrating and vital as any which the romanticist can bestow. Each type, I say, has its dangers, but there is need of both; not only of Wagner, but of Beethoven; not only of Shakespeare, but of Virgil.

Yet into such estimations there enters a practical question, which in judging of poetry is too often ignored. In order to appreciate the severer type of any art, long training is required. In music or painting no one questions the need of special and technical preparation, not only before a man can create, but before he can fully understand. In poetry, on the other hand, there seems to most men to be nothing to learn. The mere mechanism of verse, the scheme of English prosody, comes by nature, or may be mastered in an hour. This done, the boy thinks that he may read as he likes, and make his study of poetry a holiday thing. But it is not so; there is that to learn which takes years in the learning. For myself, I am no fanatical advocate of a classical education,—a form of training which must needs lose its old unique position now that there is so much else to know. But for one small class of students such an education still seems to me essential; for those, namely, who desire to

judge the highest poetry aright. Must it not needs be so? In all else we may be wiser than the ancients, but Evolution has not again produced a language or a race like the Greek. The *Exemplaria Graeca* should still, as in the days of Horace, be the study of night and morn; and with the Greek, too, we must rank that small group of poets on whose lips the language of Rome also was worthy of the mistress of the world.

Yet with modern studies, in this crowded age, the modern man of letters is often content. And classical education itself has felt the influence of science, and tends to make history and philology, rather than poetry, its leading aims. But surely not philology nor history, but such a vital sense of the spirit of classical poetry as your father possessed, *that* is the true treasure of antiquity and the flower of the Past. For indeed the highest use of language, the highest use, one may say, of history itself, has been to bestow upon mankind a few thousand lines of poetry for which all other study of bygone ages is but practice and preparation, and which should become by endless broodings no mere acquisition from without, but the inmost structure and prepotent energy of the onward-striving soul.

> Praise Him who gave no gifts from oversea,
> But gave thyself to thee.

And this the long line of poets themselves have been the first to feel. They have recognised the true tradition, and lived again the ancient song.

> Quam paene furvae regna Proserpinae
> Et judicantem vidimus Aeacum
> Sedesque discretas piorum et
> Aeoliis fidibus querentem—

Those complaints, indeed, might seem ill to befit the ears of the pious, in their discrete abodes. Yet nothing draws us closer to Horace than this ; his instinct in the face of death itself, that from Sappho's lips " things worthy of a sacred silence " must sound across the underworld.

What Horace here has done for Sappho, that Dante in his noblest passages, your father in his most perfect poem, have done for the *altissimo poeta.* The one has expressed the veneration of the modern, as the other of the mediaeval world. And surely that ode " To Virgil," read with due lightening of certain trochaic accents in the latter half of each line, touches the high-water mark of English song. Apart from the specific allusions, almost every phrase recalls and rivals some intimate magic, some incommunicable fire : " Landscape-lover, lord of language " ; *Tum sciat aerias Alpes et Norica si quis ;* " All the charm of all the Muses " ; *Aonas in montis ut duxerit una sororum.*

But most Virgilian of all are the two central lines :

Light among the vanish'd ages ; star that gildest yet this phantom shore ;
Golden branch amid the shadows, kings and realms that pass to rise no more.

Ay, this it is which lives for us out of the confused and perishing Past ! The gross world's illusion and the backward twilight are lit by that sacred ray.

And how noble a comparison is that of the elect poet himself to his one golden bough in Avernus' forest, which gleamed amid the sea of green !

Talis erat species auri frondentis opaca
Ilice ; sic leni crepitabat bractea vento.

We are here among things that shall endure. It may be that our English primacy in poetry, now some four centuries old, is drawing to its close. It may be that the art must pass ere long to younger races, with fresher idioms and a new outlook on this ancient world. But whatever else shall pass from us, Tennyson shall remain. *His* rhythm also shall "sound for ever of imperial" England; shall be the voice and symbol of this age of mighty workings, this world-ingathering race.

> We sail'd wherever ship could sail;
> We founded many a mighty state;
> Pray God our greatness may not fail
> Thro' craven fears of being great!

How august, how limitless a thing is his own spirit's upward flight! In "The Voyage" he has given us the impulse of glorious youth; and in "Vastness" the old man's outlook, as of "one who feels the immeasurable world"; and in "Crossing the Bar" he has borne the soul onward, on "such a tide as moving seems asleep," into the infinity which men call death.

What honour for him, what progress still, in that unknown which we shall some day know!

Dicite, felices animae, tuque optume vates;—

round him, as round Musaeus of old, the souls shall press and cling; of him too shall we ask the heart-stirring question, and receive the wise reply; "things worthy of a sacred silence" he too shall utter among the dead.

TO TENNYSON

Καὶ αὐτὸς οὐρανὸς ἀκύμων.—PLOTINUS.

I

When from that world ere death and birth
He sought the stern descending way,
Perfecting on our darkened earth
His spirit, citizen of day;—
Guessed he the pain, the lonely years,—
The thought made true, the will made strong?
Divined he from the singing spheres
Eternal fragments of his song?

II

Hoped he from dimness to discern
The Source, the Goal, that glances through?—
That one should know, and many turn—
Turn heavenward, knowing that he knew?—

Once more he rises; lulled and still,
Hushed to his tune the tideways roll;
These waveless heights of evening thrill
With voyage of the summoned Soul.

III

O closing shades that veil and drown
The clear-obscure of shore and tree!
O star and planet, shimmering down
Your sombre glory on the sea!
O Soul that yearned to soar and sing,
Enamoured of immortal air!
Heart that thro' sundering change must cling
To dream and memory, sad and fair!

IV

Sun, star, and space and dark and day
Shall vanish in a vaster glow;
Souls shall climb fast their age-long way,
With all to conquer, all to know:
But thou, true Heart! for aye shalt keep
Thy loyal faith, thine ancient flame;—
Be stilled an hour, and stir from sleep
Reborn, re-risen, and yet the same.

[So far as the Editor is aware this criticism of Edgar Allan Poe is here published for the first time.]

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Edgar Allan Poe has on two grounds a strong claim to the inclusion of specimens of his work in any collection of the world's best literature. His first claim is historical—arising from his position among the earliest distinguished writers of the great American branch of English-speaking folk. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum* may be said now by the Western as well as by the Eastern world ; and a man whom the United States count among their intellectual ancestry could have no better vantage-ground for enduring fame.

Poe's second claim to representation must rest mainly, I think, upon a narrow ground ; namely, the strange beauty of a few lines of his verse. How strong that claim will be with true verse-lovers I must presently try to show. First, however, a few words must be said on his prose writings. Poe's historical position has been, perhaps inevitably, regarded as a reason for reprinting many volumes of his prose ; but it is only on some few tales that his admirers will wish to linger. He wrote often actually for bread ; often to gratify some mere personal feeling ; sometimes (as in *Eureka*) with a kind of schoolboy exultation over imaginary dis-

coveries which adds a pang to our regret that so open and eager a spirit should have missed its proper training. With some of the tales, of course, the case is very different. A good many of them, indeed, are too crude, or too repulsive, or too rhetorical for our modern taste. But the best are veritable masterpieces; and have been, if not actually the prototypes, at least the most ingenious and effective models of a whole *genre* of literature which has since sprung up in rich variety. Growing science has afforded a wider basis for these strange fantasies; and modern literary art has invested with fresh realism many a wild impossible story. But Poe's best tales show a certain intensity which perhaps no successor has reached—a mood of mind which must keep its grim attractiveness so long as the mystery of the Universe shall press upon the lives of men.

Fear was the primitive temper of the human race. It lies deep in us still; and in some minds of high development the restless dread, the shuddering superstition of the savage, have been sublimed into a new kind of cosmic terror. "Je ne vois qu'infini par toutes les fenêtres," said Baudelaire; and the Infinite which he felt encompassing him was nothing else than Hell. Poe, whom Baudelaire admired and translated, was a man born like Baudelaire to feel this terror; born to hear

> Time flowing in the middle of the night,
> And all things moving toward a day of doom;

born to behold all sweet and sacred emotion curdling, as it were, on the temple-floor into supernatural horror;

> latices nigrescere sacros,
> Fusaque in obscenum se vertere vina cruorem.

To transmit this thrill without undue repulsion needs more of art than either Poe or Baudelaire could often give. Poe had not Baudelaire's cruel and isolating lust, but he dwelt even more than Baudelaire upon the merely loathsome, upon aspects of physical decay. "Soft may the worms about her creep!" is his requiem over a maiden motionless in death; "this cheek where the worm never dies" is his metaphor for the mourner's sorrow. Such phrases do not justify the claim sometimes made for Poe of *goût exquis*, of infallible artistic instinct. Yet this cosmic terror in the background of his thought gives to some of his prose pages a constraining power; and in some rare verses it is so fused with beauty that it enters the heart with a poignancy that is delight as well as pain.

The charm of poetry can be created for us by but few men; but Poe in a few moments was one of these few. His poems, indeed, have been very variously judged; and their merit is of a *virtuoso* type which needs special defence from those who keenly feel it.

Few verse-writers, we must at once admit, have been more barren than Poe of any serious "message"; more unequal to any "criticism of life"; narrower in range of thought, experience, emotion. Few verse-writers whom we can count as poets have left so little verse, and of that little so large a proportion which is indefensibly bad. On some dozen short pieces alone can Poe's warmest admirers rest his poetic repute.[1] And how terribly

[1] Say "The Raven," "The Bells," "Annabel Lee," "The Haunted Palace," "The Sleeper," "Stanzas to Helen," "Israel," "The City in the Sea," "For Annie," "Dreamland," "To One in Paradise," "Ulalume." I have scarcely ever seen merit attributed to any other of his pieces.

open to criticism some of even those pieces are ! To analyse " Ulalume," for instance, would be like breaking a death's-head moth on the wheel. But nevertheless a dozen solid British poets of the Southey type would to my mind be well bartered for those few lines of Poe's which after the sternest sifting must needs remain.

To justify this preference I must appeal, as I have said, to a kind of *virtuoso* standard, which is only too apt to degenerate into mere pose and affectation. But in truth, besides and apart from —if you will, below—that nobler view of poets as prophets, message-bearers, voices of the race, there does exist a very real aspect of all verse-makers as a vast band of persons playing a game something like patience *in excelsis*—a game in which words are dealt round as counters, and you have to arrange your counters in such a pattern that rivals and spectators alike shall vote you a prize : one prize only being awarded for about ten thousand competitors in the game. Poe has won a prize with a few small patterns which no one in his generation could exactly beat.

> Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
> On its roof did float and flow ;—
> This,—all this,—was in the olden
> Time long ago.

These lines contain no particular idea ; and the last two of them consist literally of a story-teller's formula as old as folk-lore. But who before Poe made this egg stand on its end ? What inward impulse struck the strong note of *Banners*, and marshalled those long vowels in deepening choir, and interjected the intensifying pause—*all this*— and led on through air to the melancholy *olden*,

and hung in the void of an unknown eternity the diapason of *Time long ago*? Or, to take a simple test, can you quote, say, from Byron one single stanza of like haunting quality? can you quote *many* such stanzas from whomsoever you will?

Such verbal criticism as this should not, as I have said, be pushed too far. I will conclude with the most definite praise which I can find for Poe; and this same poem, "The Haunted Palace," suggests the theme.

The most appealing verses of many poets have been inspired by their own life's regret or despair. Burns is at his best in his "Epitaph," Cowper in his "Castaway," Shelley in his "Stanzas written in Dejection," Keats in his "Drear-nighted December," Mrs. Browning in "The Great God Pan." In "The Haunted Palace" Poe allegorises the same theme.

We cannot claim for Poe the gravity of Cowper, nor the manliness of Burns, nor the refinement of Mrs. Browning, nor the ethereality of Shelley, nor the lovableness of Keats. Our sympathy, our sense of kinship, go forth to one of these other poets rather than to him. Yet to me at least none of these poems comes home so *poignantly* as Poe's; none quivers with such a sense of awful issues, of wild irreparable ill.

Ἐκ μικρῶν ὀλίγιστα. Little indeed of Poe's small poetic output can stand the test of time. Call him, if you will, the least of the immortals; but let us trust that immortal he shall be; that the ever-gathering wind which bears down to us odours of the Past shall carry always a trace of the bitter fragrance crushed out from this despairing soul.

EARLY POEMS

[The two prize poems on Belisarius which follow were written at Cheltenham College at the age of fourteen. They were both sent in on the same occasion, and were both successful.]

BELISARIUS

I remember when I think
That my youth was half divine.
TENNYSON.

BLIND I am, and poor and aged, but my spirit holds its might,
Though my life, within me waning, flickers wildly into night:

Yet I fail as I remember all the days that I have seen,
As I live through all the honour, all the sorrow that has been.

Well it is remembrance leaves us record of our younger breath,
Else, bemazed with ancient sadness, should we stagger unto death;

Well that infant passion weakens as we near the voiceless tomb,

Else would pangs of slow deferment drench
our days in restless gloom.

Yet I know in pristine gladness how my
vision-hope was high,
As I scaled barbarian mountains, slowly
nearer on the sky;

As I ranged barbarian forests when my step
was firm and free,
Circled in a haze of glory, gazing through a
fair To Be:

So I joyed in fresher summers, gentler
winters, till at length,
When my flesh was formed in sinew, and
my manhood reared in strength,

Then I left my father-valleys, plunging
headlong into strife,
Pass'd through danger, pass'd through
honour, all vicissitudes of life;

And my strong soul buoyed me onward,
eager for the future chance,
And my life-way showed before me as a line
of sure advance;

On from glory unto glory, jubilant through
ringing years,
And acclaim of many nations thundered in
my victor-ears.

So I leapt from high to higher, conqueror
where'er I came,
Till the nations lapsed in slumber, shadowed
by my hero-name :

Then, as one who up a mountain battling
higher ever climbs,
So I stood before my people, master of the
coming times.

And the traveller struggles onward, joying
in the swifter change,
Over ridge and ridge of moorland, heav'd in
slowly heightening range—

Gazing on the nearer heavens, or the lands
beneath him spread,
Far from solitary summits, silent, wind
inhabited ;

Boasting in an ebriate fancy, " I am freed
from man below,
And my proper will shall steer me in the
way that I will go :"

But the storm-blast rushes on him, and the
cloud is dense around,
And he buffets slowly downward, mazed,
from unfamiliar ground ;

And he courts unknown perdition, martyr
to a blind device,

Staggering over slippery herbage, headlong
down a precipice—

So I failed from out my splendour, shaken
from a peerless fame,
Hurled from power into baseness, cast from
glory into shame.

Women are our evil spirits since the hour
when breath began,
When in pristine Paradise the first woman
damned the man;

Springing from his side she wrought a
trustful helpmate's endless ill,
And the wrong wherewith she wronged him
tinges all our action still:

Heroes, through the crescent cycles, quailed
before a woman's might,
And it was a woman drove me into penury
and night.

Ever in the stream of life some swimmer
gasps in frantic death,
Sudden through the upper waters, slow
through denser gulphs beneath:

Swift another strikes triumphant, splashing
through the breasted spray,
But the flood above him closing shuts him
from the sight of day.

Once the lord of lordly nations, I, whose mandate none gainsaid,
Mulct with pain a baser people of the pittance of my bread:

Round me rush the eddying waters, on my face the sea-winds play,
And afar, from roseate summits, melts the solitary day.

What is that to him that founders, struggling with a quicksand chance,
What is all the life of nature to the fool of circumstance?

What is all the glory round it to an eye that cannot see?—
Not for me the snowy splendours, and the sunset not for me.

Phantoms people all my blackness, shadows of a wondrous Past
Gleam before me for an instant, ceding in a boundless Vast;

And a vision fades and brightens, the fair likeness of a form,
Faint sometimes in mystic distance, drenched sometimes in flaming storm;

Yet returning ever nearer, flashing from its lustrous eyes

Dreamful pleasure, dreamful sadness, till
again in dark it dies.

Lo, as one in flickering embers finds a vision
of his youth,
And entrancèd as he gazes, knows he sees
the living Truth:

So I joy with ancient glories, so I throb with
ancient strife,
Closing all the Past in Present, living through
a by-gone life.

What if I had lived a peasant, cherishing
my earlier home,
Stifling all my restless yearning, all my vague
desire to roam,

To be lord of larger action, wider circles of
my kind,
Nor to let its youthful vigour rot, unused,
from out my mind.

Were it well to dull with labour all return of
joy and pain?—
No—a bye-word of the nations, yet I have
not lived in vain;

Not in vain have saved my nation, though
it lapse in impotence,
For a power grows in using, grows a large
self-confidence:

And my spirit broadens in me, crescent into
perfect man,
For his name is fair for ever who has worked
the work he can.

Slowly sinks my ancient nation, lost in
luxury and crime,
And I sit in blind oblivion, but I note the
pregnant time;

Onward all the ages circle, and the peoples
rise and fail,
Leaving glory-paths behind them, as the
shattered comet tail:

Each is nobler than the former, mistress of a
larger space,
Till the lands be yoked in concert under one
resultant race—

Not a race of nerveless women, clutching at
the present good—
Wise in thought and swift in action, lords of
iron hardihood,

One to other closer knitted, larger-hearted,
stronger-souled,
Workers upon earth, and blameless as the
great-named prince of old.

Oh that I might see their glory, and might
linger on the earth

Till the dying nations travail, labouring into
newer birth.

Then would desolation vanish, merged in
wonder, merged in bliss;
I should know the mystic Future, I should
feel the Truth that is.

But I roam through night eternal, and my
spirit faints within
As the peoples stagger round me, drunk with
folly, dead in sin.

Lord, how long the thankless evil? are
men doomed to endless strife,
Dabbling ever, bloody-fingered, in the dark-
ling stream of life?

For the devils hold dominion, and the good
are crushed and poor,
And no heaven-sign can warn us that the
Judge is at the door.

Where is Wisdom? far apart she habiteth
untravelled lands,
And the peoples seek her blindly, stretching
out unanswered hands:

Where is Truth? in viewless blackness, in
the womb of the To Be,
For the seen we understand not, and the real
we cannot see.

Yet a beacon-fire within me leads me through
tumultuous night,
Every bosom owns a sparkle of the universal
light;

And a day shall come—and, coming, cheer
me—when my proper ray
Shall, with other rays convergent, broaden in
eternal day.

What is Freedom? no man knows her,
no man yet hath seen her face,
She is splendrous in the distance, mistress of
a crowning race—

Of a race that shall not bluster when its
strength has ebbed in sleep,
Charming not the rising lion to the level of
the sheep.

What is Right? the blind commandment of
a race of puny kings,
Heeding not the laws of nature nor the
ordinance of things.

For the many tame the mighty, netted round
with selfish rules,
And the strong in soul and body fear the
multitude of fools.

Lo, as one who toils in patience slow through
unfamiliar seas,

Bare of compass, bare of viand, driven by the drifting breeze,

Slowly cleaving shattered surges, bound for never-trodden shores,
Weary with the slow recurrence, the pulsation of his oars;

And he trusts to reach a haven, eager for the coming day,
Straining through the lowering cloud-banks, till he maddens with dismay;

Frantic first, but after quiet, drowsy with approaching death,
Silent under lonely splendours, perishes with rattling breath—

Such the life of man is ever, such his weary pilgrimage,
Hope in youth, despair in manhood, growing with his growing age;

Till he sinks in torpid stupor, stoic to the rising chance,
Numbed to pleasure, numbed to sorrow, all the round of circumstance.

What is Fame? the brilliant bubble throned upon the breaking wave,
And it trembles into nothing, ruined into a nameless grave;

Or from action's stirring furnace it ariseth like a spark,
And it brightens for a moment, and it glitters into dark.

What is Life? a dream, a nightmare, heavy on the labouring breast
Of a man that yearns, and yearns in vain, to enter into rest.

Shall I shake the nightmare headlong, shall I rid me of the woe?
No,—it were an evil passport to the realms where I shall go.

For I will not sleep in blackness, silent in the silent tomb,
All my spirit slowly struggles into plenitude to come.

I shall mix through timeless ages with the shadows of the great,
Joying in a perfect nature, joying in a perfect state:

There with all the strong Life-leaders, with the flower of all the Past,
I shall reap a larger honour, circling through the mellow Vast.

Yet methinks in riper cycles, when the Truth shall know her own,

When benign, long-lingering Wisdom,
mounts a universal throne,

Then shall I be sung and storied, great
among the sons of Time,
One who conquered in the battle, one who
wrought his life sublime.

Surely, then, for such an honour it were not
in vain to do,
Not in vain to play the hero, and to cleave
life's riddle through;

Not in vain to mourn and struggle, not in
vain in shame to die,
For my fame shall live beyond me, and the
recompense is nigh.

BELISARIUS

And grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.
TENNYSON.

A BEGGAR begging in the public streets—
A blind man sitting in the market place—
Well; there are many beggars, many blind;
But one blind beggar, Belisarius.
Then said a young man to his fellow youth—
"Who is this beggar? tho' his state be mean,
His spirit seems above his misery;
And ever and anon he mumbles forth,
From the gapped circlet of his ruined teeth,
'I bide my time, I wait the latter days;
All men must perish, but I know the end.'"
To whom his comrades answered with a laugh:
"Oh! he is brimmed with stirring history,
Unequal conflicts, glorious victories,
And kings that quailed before his hero might
When the blind beggar was a general.

But ask himself, for he will tell you all."
Then asked the young man of the aged one,
"Old man, who art thou? tell me all thy tale,
And thy life-history."—And the old man smiled:
As some faint meteor in the pale-starred even
Gleams from the heavens on a joyless tract,—
A tract of wide waste lands, and solitary,
Save beasts that howl beneath a cloud-wrapt night,
And reddens for a moment, and is gone;
And the wind moans, and the far bittern booms,
And the reeds shiver, and the marsh-fed willows
Sway their lank arms awhile, and all is still:
So gleamed a smile across his haggard face,
A smile that only lit his desolation.
Smiling, he sighed: "So soon, so soon, forgot?
Yet not for ever, for I know the end.
But I will tell thee all things from the first—

"As erst the many fountain'd vaults of heaven
Burst open on a world of giant sin,
So from far frost-bound regions of the North
Rushed the barbarians on the Roman world.
Came wolfish Vandal, came cold-stunted Hun,

Came Alaric, scourge of God, scourging a land
Of Roman majesty and Roman crime :
And that great ancient Empire of the West
Fell—and the Eastern rocked upon its base—
Till I arose, a Saviour in the land,
A strong progenitor of nation-good,
Warrior by nature, peasant monarch-sought :
I saved my country—and I beg my bread.
Thrace was my birth-place — champaign heaven blest,
Rich in broad water, rich in swelling crag,
And lustrous bank of forest precipice.
Oft when in youth, on sunlit mountain lawns,
All eagle-eyed I pierced the boundless blue,
Or, tranced beside the ever roaring sea,
Gazed on the wind-borne sheets of ragged foam—
I felt my great soul struggle in my breast
And pulse me onward unto larger deeds,
And slowly shoot into the perfect man.
But when I read of heroes, Homer sung,
God-men, who far on plains of Pergamus
Strode, triple-armed in panoply all gold,
Nor feared to cope with warrior deities,
But drove them bleeding to the splendrous heights
Of many-peaked Olympus whence they came—

I too, I said, will be a warrior chief,
And marshal hosts to death or victory,
And will be great among the sons of men.

" So I arose, and girt myself for fight,
And was a soldier of the Emperor.
Then step and step I rose through great exploits,
Until men hailed me General of the East.
Then when on Dara rushed the Persian host,
Elate in pride of fancied victory,
I met them, warden of the city gates—
I fought, I conquered—I deserved my honor;
Not less than they who strove in days of old
Along far foam-girt Marathonian fields,
And checked the march of Eastern despotism,
And drove back Xerxes to his paradise,
And wrought themselves an everlasting name,
When all the corse-piled plain was pale with death—
Or they who, martyrs to their fatherland,
Champions of Europe, glory of old Greece,
Failed from the battle-shout at Salamis,
Sank in the shadows of Thermopylae.

" Then, when a strife arose in Africa,
And, red in battle first-fruits, leapt the war,

And great Justinian sent his choicest troops,
And me, his choicest General,—I went,
I fought, I conquered ; I deserved my honor—
Not less than he who once upon a time,
In those dim years of the great-storied past,
Stept on the surge-struck Carthaginian shores,
And drew her soul from the Phoenician queen,
And left her weltering on a funeral pyre,
And rooted out the pristine Latian tribes,
And was the founder of a royal race ;
A race whose deeds shall shiver through the vast,
While the sun flames and the great waters roll,
And the wind roars from unknown solitudes,
And the strong mountains on their base endure ;
Or he who, lusty in the lusty prime
Of Roman valour, razed the city gates
And blotted Carthage from the nation-roll,
And wrought for Rome a priceless victory.

" I, conqueror on the throne of Africa,
Dealt victor-justice to a humbled race,
And crushed the yet rebelling Gelimer,
And sailed triumphant to Byzantium ;
And I was great among the sons of men.
Consul—a year sole Consul—every land

Knew me, and cringed an all-submissive neck
To the god-might of Belisarius.
Then, when Italia lay a wilderness,
Bared by the hurricane of civil war,
I crossed in hope the Adriatic blue,
Where emerald isles, inlaid in sapphire sea,
Gleam on the mariner, beached with rippled sand.
I crossed in hope, and I returned in glory ;
For under the walls of old Parthenope
I fought, and, heralded by victory,
I carved a way to sometime royal Rome,
And, marching glorious to the Capitol,
Gave her once more a place among the nations.
Pent in the city by the unanimous might
Of fierce barbarians, with my own right hand
I wrought deliverance, wrought victory,
As he who, joying in his youth divine,
Strode all victorious to the farthest Ind,
And made the peoples know his sovereignty,
And was the monarch of the ringing world.

" How shall I tell of her, my pilot star,
Glorious adulteress, vile as beautiful,
Who not alone in plenitude of peace
Love-softened all this rugged warrior-heart,
But, ministrant on clamorous battle-plains,
Sated my spirit with a strange delight.

She, leagued in love with the Empress-courtezan,
Who swayed the counsels of a glutted spouse,
Whelmed me in irredeemable disgrace,
And fouled the lustre of untarnished act,
And summoned me from conquest to despair.
Long years I crept through shame unmerited,
Humbled in peace, all glorious in war,—
And mighty only on the battlefield.
At last, when all barbarian multitudes
Rallied upon the Eastern capital,
Justinian called me forth from obloquy,
Like that crisp-pated Quintus from the plough,
And bade me save my country ; and I went
And chased their armies to the wilderness,
And wrought a strong redemption for the land.
He crowned me with all-noble recompense—
He met slight merit with benign reward—
He blinded me, and cast me forth to beg—
Poor fool !—or little recking future fame.

" Though slowly staggering in the vale of years,
I shudder not at that all victor Death,
Nor quail at fathomless eternity.
No storied tomb, up-reared on hero-bones,
No great memorial of greater dead,

Shall signal ruined Belisarius.
Yet much I joy, seeing my backward years
Loom deep into the dead mist of the Past,
That I repent not aught which I have done.
I have not worked my fall, but Destiny
And that serene pre-eminence of God.
Yet this I know, and with calamity
Grows trust, and all unshaken confidence,
That though men hold me poor, and blind, and mean,
Cast down from honour, hopeless, desolate ;
Yet, in those generations far to come,
When they that spurn me from their palaces
Shall slumber with the unremembered dead,
My fame shall broaden in the stream of time,
Wide-circling from my death-plunge, and a rumour,
And glorious memory of glorious deeds—
My deeds—my deeds—shall ring through after time."

[In 1859, while still at school, Frederic Myers entered for the national "Robert Burns Centenary" competition with the following poem, which was placed second in the judges' award. I quote an extract from the *Manchester Guardian* of 1859:

"I have seen the poem, and can only say it is (with all its faults) quite as extraordinary a performance for a boy of that age as anything of Chatterton's. It is peculiarly refined and artful in expression, and elaborate in metrical structure. It can hardly be wondered at, when one knows the writer's age, that the thoughts should not quite come up to the pomp and polish of the style. But I repeat, it is a wonderful work for fifteen, and I hope it will be printed, as it fully deserves to be."]

CENTENARY POEM

I

He passed, our wonder, our regret;
Two generations since have yielded breath,
But bright remembrance glows among us yet,
And glory broadens from the plunge of death.
So sure a fame the sacred poet waits,
That though unreverenced he cross the gates

Which bar the realms of action and of doom ;
He murmurs not, content to see
His praise beyond obscurity,
His glory out of gloom ;
Nor fitly charges equal fate, but knows
That through conjectured ages far to be,
Meet honour fails not from his tomb, but grows
To plenitude with just posterity.

II

So is it with that memory we set
More fair than any fame to Scotsmen yet ;
For neither passed he in mid storm of praise,
As Romulus in thunder, from the throng,
Nor led in honoured ease melodious days,
And from his fulness shook the land with song:
But through stern toil of unrejoicing youth
He reared a spirit open-eyed to truth,
Nor baser ever through calamity,
But keen from deepening care to see
The broad world glad in good, and misery
Prelude and germ of fair eternity.

III

No station his of wealth or honoured birth,
No fame ancestral whence to stir the earth,
Nought save his manhood and high work ;

So truth arose in peasant mind
Wherewith all freedom rings,
Of force to scatter to the wind
False pride which station brings ;
" Man's exaltation is not that he rules,
Nor can accrue just honour unto fools ;
The good is noblest of his kind,
The poet more than kings."

IV

Therefore his people glories in his birth,
And under many a morn his name is great,
And we from many a realm of earth
His honour celebrate
Who forced not song for petty praise,
Nor in feigned passion raved for sympathy,
But lightened into earnest lays,
In truth and rare simplicity ;
And knowing man to man is kin,
Sang loud to brothers far and near,
And stood in strength that rose within
Unwarped by praise, unchecked by fear.

V

O silent shapes athwart the darkening sky !
Magnificence of many-folded hills,
Where the dead mist hangs and the lone hawks cry,

Seamed with the white fall of a thousand rills;
O lucid lakes! serene from shore to shore,
With promontories set of solemn pines,
Broad mirrors which the pale stars tremble o'er,
Deep-drawn among the misty mountain lines;
O holy hearths, intemerate of crime!
O tale of martyrs by the flickering sod!
O righteous race, in stedfast toil sublime!
O noblest poem, "Let us worship God!"
Ye taught him, shaping truthful days;
Of you he told to men, for he
From wayside reeds sweet tone could raise
More dear than full accord of symphony,
Knowing that whatsoe'er the poet sings,
Of prototyped in nature or in man,
Moves deeply, though it touch not wrath of kings
Or frantic battle-van.

VI

But most intent the people hears,
Tranced to silence, thrilled to tears,
When the joys of love and fears
Fall in music on their ears;

Stirring noble sympathies,
Waking hope and high desire,
And, to introspective eyes,
Granting glimpse of Heaven's fire.

VII

Nor scorns he such delight, whose heart and eye
Are tempered to the truth of poesy,
Nor following baser natures, would degrade
Aught from that honour which the Eternal made ;
Nor ranks this frame the soul's offence,
Nor lovely form the slave of sense ;
But knowing good is beauty, hath believed
Beauty is also good, nor oft deceived ;
Yea, such a surge of life his pulses fills,
And so abounding passion through him thrills,
That with fierce cries for sympathy,
With longing and with agony,
The glory of his thought goes forth to greet
All fair, though unregarding, he shall meet,
And oft with price the mean endues,
The ignoble holds for rare ;
And wooing bright imagined hues
A phantom loveliness pursues,
But knows too late an equal otherwhere.

VIII

So in deep ambrosial night
Falls a star from heaven's height;
Mad for earth, a sliding spark
Down the deadness of the dark,
Falleth, findeth his desire,
Loseth his celestial fire,
Quenched to iron, like his love,
For her face is fair above;
But within her heart is stone,
Adamant and chalcedon.

IX

But he for whom three peoples mourn,
On many a breeze of madness borne,
At many a fancied loss forlorn,
Yet soon as stedfast will began,
And life through firmer manhood ran,
To one prime passion nobly true,
In bliss, but most in sorrow, knew
A woman's perfect love, best boon to man.

X

So lived he, fearing God; his ways
Were dim with penury, uncheered of praise;
Yet not without a noble work begun—
One cry for truth against the might of wrong;

One bolt from thunder-volleys hurled,
On that grim prince who rules the world,
The bright defiance of a lightning song;
O not without a noble work begun,
Failed he in sorrow from the sun,
Fared he to tell the deeds that he had done,
Leaving his people, to the latest days,
A heritage of unforgotten lays.

XI

But nearer aye the hounds of Ruin bayed,
And Error was upon him, that he strayed,
And close at heart remorseful Phrensy preyed,
And pitiless Disaster ran him down;
Till mute Death took him, weary, undismayed,
And calm in hallowed earth his bones were laid;
His the toil, be his the crown!
O great heart by low passions swayed!
O high soul by base cares assayed!
O silence, silence, never to be broken,
Till some dread word from the white throne be spoken!

XII

Ah ! yet we trust he findeth end to ill,
Nor in deep peace remembereth misery,
Who in the heart of his loved land is still,
Between the mountains and the clamorous sea.
There all night the deeps are loud,
Billow far to billow roaring,
But he, sleeping in his shroud,
Heareth not the waters pouring.
Yea, though the sun shall wheel a splendrous form
Unseen, above the dim cloud-cataract,
Though lightnings glimmer to the rainy tract,
And all the land be wan with storm,
He knows not, wont of old to see,
In high thought severed from his kind,
Beyond the wrack Divinity,
Jehovah on the wind.

XIII

O story sadder than dethronèd kings—
A poet lost to earth !
Yea, though his land in plenty sings,
Forgetful of her dearth,

And though his people in just laws is great,
And willing fealty to an equal state,
And though her commerce on all ocean thrives,
And every province swarms with happy lives,
Yet weep the great heart hidden in the sod;
All else to man through faithful toil arrives—
The poet straight from God.

[This poem, which was awarded the Cheltenham College prize for English verse, was written at the age of sixteen.]

THE DEATH OF SOCRATES

The day was come : its earliest morn had brought
His true disciples to the teacher's cell,
Who gathering round the master of their thought
Wept him they loved so well.

Yea moving blindly in much heaviness,
And left amid perplexities alone,
They mourned as men in a great wilderness
Mourn when their guide is gone.

Remembering how, without reward or praise,
That temperate truth had drawn the hope of Greece,
Leading to wisdom,—pleasant are her ways,
And all her paths are peace :

But sternly sent the arrogant to school,
And on false-seeming set the brand of shame ;
Looking beyond the pomp of petty rule,
To whence true honour came.

So men arraigned the saint of blasphemy ;
The sage arraigned they of corrupting youth ;
Arraigned the saint whose life was purity,
The sage whose speech was truth.

But rather in that chance he did rejoice,
Yea, set to blessings that calamity ;
And doubting nothing made heroic choice,
As he had lived to die.

Nor bated aught of blameless innocence,
Nor courted any pity of the strong ;
But dauntless ever in a great defence
He cried against the wrong.

Nor might he not foreshadow One to be,
Dragged downward by the race He came to save,
Through bitterer scorn, unjuster contumely,
Down to a grander grave.

Or as that cloud of faithful witnesses
Marched cheerfully on torture and on sword,

Expecting after any agonies
The coming of the Lord :

So looked he on his judges, witting well
Their sorest penalty must bring release
In such an end as theirs who nobly fell
Before the gates of Greece,

Who passed in blood without applause or crown
From that loud day to where we cannot see :
Such loss their gain, and such defeat renown,
Such death their victory.

Likewise even now did his own peace rebuke
In prison his movèd friends for fruitless fears ;
Then spake the sage, when that accustomed look
Had set a truce to tears :

" Upon their death the silver swans rejoice,
Meeting that God to whom their lives belong,
And pour the glory of their treasured voice
In floods of jubilant song :

" Shall I not too be glad, who pass to range
In some blest place with the great dead, my peers,

Proceeding through all form of nobler change
Down unimagined years ?

"For I believe I am not wholly dust,
But somewhere, somewhere, with diviner powers,
They greatly live, the spirits of the just,
A larger life than ours.

"For we abiding in infirmity
In fleshly tabernacles groan forlorn,
Expecting till on this mortality
It break, the perfect morn.

"Yea, as the ocean-monsters, leagues from land,
Of upper splendours live unwittingly,
Wallowing a black bulk over boundless sand,
Deep in the gloom of sea ;

"We to the blessed gods are such as they ;
In doubt and consternation draw we breath,
Sorrow our joy, and darkness is our day,
Yea, and our life is death.

"But when at length release from flesh is given,
From doubt, and folly, and desire, and fears,
Then shall the voiceful presences of heaven
Ring on bewildered ears ;

"Then shall the true earth open on our sight,
And the true firmament above us shine,

And dwelling ever in that perfect light
We too shall be divine."

He spake as babes who know not what they say,
But if of men, O Lord, be good or bad,
Then, for he did desire to see Thy day,
He seeth, and is glad.

He ceased, nor wept ; he drank the cup, nor quailed ;
The jailor stern stood softened at his side ;
Then, as the force within him slowly failed,
He laid him down and died.

Nor did he at the last at all recoil,
Nor railed at all upon malignant foes,
But cheerfully seemed passing from long toil
To some serene repose.

And o'er his death a smile stole silently,
Telling of constant calm, of holy trust ;
For who shall wait with purer heart than he
The rising of the just ?

ΕΠΙΓΡΑΜΜΑ

Not any builded shrine, since breath began,
Was half so sacred, stranger, as this sod ;
For underneath is the most righteous man
That ever knew not God.

[The following poem obtained the Chancellor's Medal at the Cambridge Commencement in 1861. I quote an interesting letter written by Mr. E. M. Oakeley in connection with it.]

FREDERIC MYERS AT CAMBRIDGE.

[To the Editor of the "Spectator."]

Sir,—For some of those whose memory goes back to 1861—unhappily a fast-decreasing number—your reference in last week's issue to Frederic Myers recalls a deeply interesting occasion, when he recited in the Cambridge Senate House his prize poem "The Prince of Wales at the Tomb of Washington." The presence of the Prince himself—then in his second year at Cambridge—lent a particular personal interest to a poem in which he was "hailed" as

> Flower of Europe, heir of half the earth,
> Descendant noble of a noble line!

Though not quite "a precocious schoolboy," Myers was then a very young undergraduate (only seventeen), and was popularly regarded in the University as a *rara avis in terris*, certainly eccentric, probably negligible. And never did the *mobile vulgus* "execute itself" more completely than that day's audience did. The first verses of the poem, declaimed in the uncompromising sing-song which poets use,

were received with an ominous sound of decided disapproval, compounded of laughs, groans, cat-calls, and hisses. Then, for a few verses, silence. Then, and till the end, applause, increasing to what the mid-Victorian newspaper was learning to call "a regular ovation." "A precocious schoolboy" Myers had certainly shown himself before this; for instance, in the striking Cheltenham College prize poem on "The Death of Socrates," in a metre always beloved by him, ending with the "Ἐπίγραμμα":

> Not any builded shrine, since breath began,
> Was half so sacred, stranger, as this sod,
> For underneath is the most righteous man
> That ever knew not God.

But still more wonderful, to be written at fifteen, was the Burns Centenary poem, beginning—

> He passed, our wonder, our regret:
> Two generations since have yielded breath,
> But bright remembrance glows among us yet,
> And glory broadens from the plunge of death—

and containing, amongst many striking stanzas (written, mind, at fifteen !), the following:

> O silent shapes athwart the darkening sky:
> Magnificence of many-folded hills,
> Where the dead mist hangs and the lone hawks cry,
> Seamed with the white fall of a thousand rills:
>
> O lucid lakes! serene from shore to shore,
> With promontories set of solemn pines,
> Broad mirrors which the pale stars tremble o'er,
> Deep drawn among the misty mountain lines;

O holy hearths, intemerate of crime!
O tale of martyrs by the flickering sod!
O righteous race, in stedfast toil sublime!
O noblest poem, "Let us worship God!"

From beginning to end his life was a romance; most of all, perhaps, in his practical realisation of the spirit of the last line of the above quotation, by the sacrifice or the postponement of a poet's fame to the urgent quest, as he thought, after new evidence of immortality!—I am, Sir, etc.,

E. M. Oakeley.

February 28, 1914.

THE PRINCE OF WALES AT THE TOMB OF WASHINGTON

Hic vir, hic est.

I

Behold he reared a race and ruled them not,
And he shall rule a race he did not rear:
Warrior and prince, their former feud forgot,
Have found a meeting here.

II

And as of all that breathes the eldest birth
Sometime in ages out of human ken
Lived in the glory of the primal earth
A life unknown to men;

III

And in their time they perished as was meet,
They perished each as he had lived, alone,
And one or two of them beneath our feet
Have stiffened into stone ;

IV

And one is standing under iron skies,
Beyond the range of life, the rule of law,
Locked in the arms of everlasting ice,
A wonder and an awe.

V

With such a marvel looked he on the tomb
Of that the rebel chief, forgiven at length,
With such a reverence pondered he the doom
Of that departed strength.

VI

And as he thought on him that lay below,
Of what a mighty one the bones were dust,
Surely by some strange sense he seemed to know
The presence of the Just.

VII

Surely he could not his own thought control,
But mute in expectation bent his head :

Seemed it not silently a solemn soul
Spake to him from the dead ?

VIII

And thereunto he listened wondering,
While thus it said or thus it seemed to say,
Live with the light and, slowly vanishing,
Dead with the dying day.

IX

I crave no pardon, Prince, that led by me
This land revolted from thy fathers' rod :
It was not I that set the people free,
It was not I, but God.

X

Nor always shall a race with one accord
Yield due allegiance to a foreign throne,
No, nor shall always bow them to a lord
Whom they have never known.

XI

Neither can one consent for ever bind
Parent and offspring, but they shall at length
A closer union in disunion find,
In separation strength.

XII

Therefore at last in wrath the land arose,
And gathered frenzy from contest begun,

And on their kinsmen turning as their foes
Fought till the fight was won.

XIII

But through their tumult was I still the same,
And with one watchword kept the land in awe,
For ever stedfast to the single name
Of liberty and law.

XIV

Then as at length an end was put to strife,
And freedom born from our calamity,
And the long labour of heroic life
Had taught us victory :

XV

By many a wild wood, many a river fair,
Where stately Susquehanna sweeps along,
And where the nightingale on Delaware
Shrills everlasting song :

XVI

And where the sun on broad Missouri sleeps,
Or loud St. Lawrence speeds him stedfastly,
And where the strength of Niagara leaps
In thunder to the sea :

XVII

Or those that sail Huronian deeps upon,
Or tread Ontario's solitary shore ;
And all the peoples west to Oregon,
And north to Labrador,

XVIII

At length delivered from a foreign yoke,
And finding fair conclusion to foul strife,
The stately cities filled with nobler folk,
And leapt to lustier life.

XIX

Yea from long tutelage risen a man at length
The mighty land took courage mightily,
To grow for evermore from strength to strength,
For evermore be free.

XX

And as the saviour of a royal race,
In ruddy gold inwrought divinely, saw
The Just at Council in a holy place,
And CATO gave them law :

XXI

Even so for many a country had I care,
And many a delegate obeyed my word ;
No thought of wealth, no thought of birth was there,
Their greatest was their lord.

XXII

Yea, for I sought their profit as my own,
But in false ways their baser captains trod :
Each loved his own advantage : I alone
My people and my God.

XXIII

Therefore I ruled them till my work was done,
And ordered all their matters as was best :
And when at length my race was nobly run
I entered into rest.

XXIV

Simple I died as when I had my birth,
Unsoiled by lucre and unwarped by fame ;
Leaving for ever to the sons of earth
My nation and my name.

XXV

In silence bent the prince an awful head,
In solemn silence turned him from the spot :
He heard the spirit of the mighty dead,
He heard and answered not.

XXVI

He left him to his glory and his rest,
Where ever, over-rained and over-shone,
Beneath the glimmer of the waning west
Shall that great ghost sleep on.

XXVII

But he returned him to his heritage
O'er many lands and many seas between,
And found the ruler of a reverent age
In majesty the Queen.

XXVIII

Who knowing well what such a love can do,
And what to her a mother's care became,
The future monarch of our race unto
Herself hath shown the same.

XXIX

With such a rule her firstborn did she rear
To tread the ways wherein his fathers trod :
So waxed his wisdom in the single fear
Of Justice and of God.

XXX

Such life of old the sturdy Sabine knew,
And Romulus was reared from such a home :
And with such sons to great dominion grew
The queen of cities, Rome.

XXXI

Likewise up-treasuring for time to be
Their future lord the flower of England saw
The wisdom of prophetic history,
The legend of the law.

XXXII

Yea they beheld him leading fearless days
In modest confidence and manly truth,
For ever winning with his royal ways
The heart of all the youth,

XXXIII

Unconsciously for ever compassing
A reign no turbulence shall think to move,
For no prerogative can fence a king
Like to his people's love.

XXXIV

But when the time was ripe she bade him go,
Nor to his ancient halls return again,
Till he might wander far, and widely know
The ways and homes of men :

XXXV

For surely such a science well befits
The son who springs with half the earth his own,
And with more honour such a sovereign sits
Upon a reverenced throne.

XXXVI

Not Alexander led so far his hosts
Across the earth, a never travelled way,
Beyond strange streams and o'er astonished coasts
Bound for the breaking day,

XXXVII

Nor drave so far the victor youth divine
The linked tigers of his leafy car,
Nor did the robber of the royal kine
His course extend so far.

XXXVIII

Albeit he caught the brazen-footed deer,
And laid the curse of Erymanthus low,
And shook at Lerna o'er the affrighted mere
The terror of his bow.

XXXIX

Hail flower of Europe, heir of half the earth,
Descendant noble of a noble line!
Blest none from heaven with so bright a birth,
So fair a fate as thine.

XL

Not at thy coming is vague terror shed
From hideous oracles and homes of guile,
Not at thy coming roar with nameless dread
The myriad mouths of Nile,

XLI

But for thy coming doth thy people wait
With stedfast confidence and hope serene;
And such a king expect to celebrate
As even now a queen:

XLII

And to thy coming looks whate'er of good
Is anywise oppressed or overworn,
Or anywhere for lack of hardihood
Is subject unto scorn :

XLIII

Albeit for thee be little left to do,
And after noble mother noble son
This task alone shall find, to carry through
The work so well begun.

XLIV

For such thy mission, prince, and such thy praise,
To war for ever with the powers of wrong,
To lift the humble into happier days,
Yea, and to crush the strong.

XLV

Oh might so long a life to me remain
And such a sacred strength in me increase,
To tell of thee, the wonder of thy reign,
Of honour and of peace.

XLVI

Oh might I see, nor only thus presage,
The mighty months at length begin to roll,
And feel the glory of a grander age
Strike on my startled soul.

XLVII

Nor me should Thracian Orpheus vanquish
then
Nor Linus, glad in mother or in sire,
No, nor Apollo strike more sweet to men
The music of his lyre.

XLVIII

Long time, O Prince, in honour hold thine
own,
With life song-worthy of all bards that
sing,
And in thy season failing, leave thy throne
To many a gracious king :

XLIX

Until all storm at length be overpast,
And every land in darkness lying still
Be filled with light, and every race at last
Learn their Redeemer's will :

L

Till every wandering sheep have turned him
home,
And shaped to pruning-hooks be every
sword,
And all the kingdoms of the earth become
The kingdom of the Lord.

[The following poem, in a slightly different form, obtained the Chancellor's medal at the Cambridge Commencement in 1863.]

THE DISTRESS IN LANCASHIRE

Γνῶθι νῦν τὰν Οἰδιπόδα σοφίαν. εἰ γάρ τις ὄζους ὀξυτόμῳ πελέκει
ἐξερείψαι κεν μεγάλας δρυός, αἰσχύνοι δέ Fοι θαητὸν εἶδος·
καὶ φθινόκαρπος ἐοῖσα διδοῖ ψᾶφον περ' αὐτᾶς,
εἴ ποτε χειμέριον πῦρ ἐξίκηται λοίσθιον·
ἢ σὺν ὁρθαῖς κιόνεσσιν δεσποσύναισιν ἐρειδομένα
μόχθον ἄλλοις ἀμφέπει δύστανον ἐν τείχεσιν
ἑὸν ἐρημώσαισα χῶρον.

PINDAR, *P.* iv. 262 *sqq.*

How LONG, o Lord of sabaoth, how long ?
wilt Thou for ever vex the earth with war ?
for lo a nation riseth great and strong,
with peopled cities and with fields of corn,
rich fields of standing corn, fine flour of wheat,
and in their pride they boast : we will not fear,
we never shall be moved : and some time
their speech Thou sufferest, but when at length
Thou hast prepared Tophet deep and large
and piled it with brimstone and much wood ;

then settest Thou Thine ensign on the hills,
Thy trump Thou blowest, and the peoples
hear.
throw wide, throw wide thy forests, Lebanon,
lament and mourn, high place of Shigionoth,
for leanness falleth on thy palaces,
on all thine oaks and on thy cedars fire.

O mighty nations, latest hope of earth,
why could ye not in one accord for aye
work out your destinies thro' faith and fear ?
or if ye needs must sever, and so close
ye cling, ye southern realms, to that stern
law,
your iron law of master and of slave,
bloodless at least let such a parting be,
of friends and not of foemen ! hear us cry,
oh hear us, from one source our blood we
draw,
sheathe, sheathe your swords my kinsmen !
Yet indeed
tho' other tribes be rancorous, other lands
unkind, we must not leave our ancient way,
tho' many a voice be loud in many a hall,
and loud the clamour of new-fangled men,
preaching advantage, but indeed we know
a nobler mistress, and her name is Law.

So sometimes in a place of riotous youth,
of riotous youth unclean and foolish play,
grows one with few to mark him, pure of face,

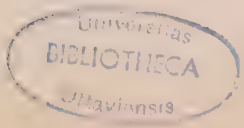
well-born and gently nurtured, neither lost
in selfish leisure, nor with endless toil
neglecting for a guerdon of slight praise,
for paltry praise the chief concerns of man:
but more and more large grace descends
from God,
and more and more his fellows hold to him;
and all the demons of the poisoned air,
Conceit, and Scorn, and foolish Heresy,
him when they look on, how he walks with
Truth,
they harm him not, for Peace hath made
him hers,
Peace at the end, and Joy, and fuller fame.

So hath this people grown, and ever held
such name among the nations: not for us
to tread the footsteps of eternal Rome,
high on the fallen necks of conquered kings:
nor yet to chaunt along our roaring ways
maronian echoes of the prince of song:
nay, not in these we glory, but to stand
among tumultuous nations steadfastly,
set for one purpose, patient to the end,
Christ in our hearts and in our borders peace.

Therefore we hold aloof and watch the
strife,
therefore we suffer; and to happy ports
no longer do their wonted armaments
spread wide the silver of their sails from far:

hushed half our factories, and half our folk
cold in the cheerless highways want for
bread.

There surely is no sorrow worse than
this,
to waste in silence, seeing crafty hands
lose half their cunning, now that none will
hire,
feeling strong limbs grow slacker, sober
brains
fire with the restless flame of penury,
nor any hope remaining but slow death,
some short sad life and some ignoble end.
for he who going down to the sea in ships
among the tempests founders far away,
he hath at any rate one noble hour,
between strong winds and water rendering
a solemn spirit to the night and God:
and he who falleth as so many fall,
who in the eager van of armed hosts
shot painfully lies perishing alone,
even he with one great thought can soothe
his soul,
one prayer for freedom and his father-land;
but whoso perisheth slowly day by day,
ghost of himself, spectator of his doom,
whereunto is he likened, or to what
can I compare him, save to that scape-goat
whom three days out into the wilderness
the seed of Abram sent to bear their sin: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but far thro' Edom strayed the bleater on,
by Ar and Nophah and by Nahaliel,
by Horeb and the heaps of Abarim,
unwitting, innocent, and sought in vain
old pastures; is there grass in Hazeroth,
or sweet fresh water in the salt dead sea?

But was she careless, England, of her sons?
not so, nor thus we know her; long ago
when Erin hungered, did not she supply?
yea when the frugal peoples of the east
thro' scarcity their old content forbore,
she sent, she succoured them, and not in vain
from far Benares and the plains of Ind
had ancient Ganges reared a hoary head,
to tell of wailing on his happy banks
by night, and corpses carried to the sea.
not so, nor thus we know her, but again
she sent, she succoured, none was found too great
to pity scarcities of meaner men,
and none so poor but from his penury
some mite he stole for mercy and for God.

A richer harvest hence, than when sometimes
relentless leaping fire hath caught and holds
the housed treasure of the merchant's toil;
and many a trader, trading never more,
is mad with ruin, but the careless crowd

at such a sight is drunken, as with wine;
for lo a fiery heat is in the air,
fierce heat in air and lurid light in heaven;
and down the silent river-reaches wide
those squandered argosies of precious oil,
new-fraught with death, float flaming to the sea.
a richer harvest hence, nor those alone
are blest who sow, nor those alone who reap;
but linked with kindly effort kindly thought
draws close the loving bonds of man with men.

Remember these, o Lord, when thou sometime
shalt visit with fierce wrath and flaming fire
this unrepentant people for their sin.
remember these, o Lord, for rarely now
cease we from serving Mammon; everywhere
false prophets have arisen who know not Thee,
wolves in sheep's clothing, spoilers of the fold:
to them we hearken; yea, tho' one should stand,
tho' one inspired stood in a sacred place
and spake bold words and prophesied the end,
we should not hear him; surely he would pipe

without our dancing ; he would mourn
to us
whereat we should not weep. and yet
sometime
he in accomplished season should appear
wise with a certain meaning. such a fate
was his, the last of Titans, for to him,
for many times to him, nor once alone,
his mother Honour and his mother Earth,
in several names the one identity,
spake clearly of the sorrow that should
come :
yea and he knew it, yea and long ago
hath he considered and contrived the end.

Yet not in our days, if Thou wilt, o Lord,
not in our sons' days let that reckoning be!
a little longer may Thy grace be given,
a little more Thy Spirit strive with men :
JAH of Jeshurun, be our Refuge still,
spread wide beneath us, Everlasting Arms :
yea, as for that stern priest by Chebar's
stream,
in solemn vision and clear prophecy,
dry bones Thou didst inform, Great Power
of God,
so come again from the four winds, o
Breath,
and breathe upon these slain that they may
live !

SAINT PAUL

SAINT PAUL

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

CHRIST! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you,
Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed:
Lo with no winning words I would entice you,
Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.

Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,
Yes, without stay of father or of son,
Lone on the land and homeless on the water
Pass I in patience till the work be done.

Yet not in solitude if Christ anear me
Waketh him workers for the great employ,
Oh not in solitude, if souls that hear me
Catch from my joyaunce the surprise of joy.

Hearts I have won of sister or of brother
Quick on the earth or hidden in the sod,

Lo every heart awaiteth me, another
Friend in the blameless family of God.

What was their sweet desire and subtle yearning,
Lovers, and women whom their song enrols ?
Faint to the flame which in my breast is burning,
Less than the love wherewith I ache for souls.

Yet it was well, and Thou hast said in season
" As is the master shall the servant be ":
Let me not subtly slide into the treason,
Seeking an honour which they gave not
Thee;

Never at even, pillowed on a pleasure,
Sleep with the wings of aspiration furled,
Hide the last mite of the forbidden treasure,
Keep for my joys a world within the
world;—

Nay but much rather let me late returning
Bruised of my brethren, wounded from
within,
Stoop with sad countenance and blushes
burning,
Bitter with weariness and sick with sin,—

Then as I weary me and long and languish,
Nowise availing from that pain to part,—
Desperate tides of the whole great world's
anguish
Forced thro' the channels of a single
heart,—

Straight to thy presence get me and reveal it,
Nothing ashamed of tears upon thy feet,
Show the sore wound and beg thine hand to heal it,
Pour thee the bitter, pray thee for the sweet.

Then with a ripple and a radiance thro' me
Rise and be manifest, o Morning Star!
Flow on my soul, thou Spirit, and renew me,
Fill with thyself, and let the rest be far.

Safe to the hidden house of thine abiding
Carry the weak knees and the heart that faints,
Shield from the scorn and cover from the chiding,
Give the world joy, but patience to the saints.

Saint, did I say? with your remembered faces,
Dear men and women, whom I sought and slew!
Ah when we mingle in the heavenly places
How will I weep to Stephen and to you!

Oh for the strain that rang to our reviling
Still, when the bruised limbs sank upon the sod,
Oh for the eyes that looked their last in smiling,
Last on this world here, but their first on God!

Let no man think that sudden in a minute
All is accomplished and the work is done ;—
Though with thine earliest dawn thou shouldst begin it
Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun.

Oh the regret, the struggle and the failing !
Oh the days desolate and useless years !
Vows in the night, so fierce and unavailing !
Stings of my shame and passion of my tears !

How have I seen in Araby Orion,
Seen without seeing, till he set again,
Known the night-noise and thunder of the lion,
Silence and sounds of the prodigious plain !

How have I knelt with arms of my aspiring
Lifted all night in irresponsive air,
Dazed and amazed with overmuch desiring,
Blank with the utter agony of prayer !

Shame on the flame so dying to an ember !
Shame on the reed so lightly overset !
Yes, I have seen him, can I not remember?
Yes, I have known him, and shall Paul forget ?

What was their tale of some one on a summit,
Looking, I think, upon the endless sea,—
One with a fate, and sworn to overcome it,
One who was fettered and who should be free ?

Round him a robe, for shaming and for searing,
Ate with empoisonment and stung with fire,
He thro' it all was to his lord uprearing
Desperate patience of a brave desire.

Ay and for me there shot from the beginning
Pulses of passion broken with my breath ;
Oh thou poor soul, enwrapped in such a sinning,
Bound in the shameful body of thy death !

Well, let me sin, but not with my consenting,
Well, let me die, but willing to be whole :
Never, o Christ,—so stay me from relenting,—
Shall there be truce betwixt my flesh and soul.

Oft shall that flesh imperil and outweary
Soul that would stay it in the straiter scope,
Oft shall the chill day and the even dreary
Force on my heart the frenzy of a hope :—

Lo as some ship, outworn and overladen,
Strains for the harbour where her sails are furled ;—
Lo as some innocent and eager maiden
Leans o'er the wistful limit of the world,

Dreams of the glow and glory of the distance,
Wonderful wooing and the grace of tears,
Dreams with what eyes and what a sweet insistance
Lovers are waiting in the hidden years ;—

Lo as some venturer, from his stars receiving
Promise and presage of sublime emprise,
Wears evermore the seal of his believing
Deep in the dark of solitary eyes,

Yea to the end, in palace or in prison,
Fashions his fancies of the realm to be,

Fallen from the height or from the deeps
arisen,
Ringed with the rocks and sundered of
the sea;—

So even I, and with a pang more thrilling,
So even I, and with a hope more sweet,
Yearn for the sign, o Christ! of thy ful-
filling,
Faint for the flaming of thine advent feet.

Ah what a hope! and when afar it glistens
Stops the heart beating and the lips are dumb;
Inly my spirit to his silence listens,
Faints till she find him, quivers till he come.

Once for a night and day upon the splendid
Anger and solitude of seething sea
Almost I deemed mine agony was ended,
Nearly beheld thy Paradise and thee,—

Saw the deep heaving into ridges narrow,
Heard the blast bellow on its ocean-way,
Felt the soul freed and like a flaming arrow
Sped on Euroclydon thro' death to day.

Ah but not yet he took me from my prison,—
Left me a little while, nor left for long,—
Bade as one buried, bade as one arisen
Suffer with men and like a man be strong.

What can we do, o'er whom the unbeholden
Hangs in a night with which we cannot cope?
What but look sunward, and with faces golden
Speak to each other softly of a hope?

Can it be true, the grace he is declaring?
Oh let us trust him, for his words are fair!
Man, what is this, and why art thou despairing?
God shall forgive thee all but thy despair.

Truly he cannot, after such assurance,
Truly he cannot and he shall not fail;
Nay, they are known, the hours of thine endurance,
Daily thy tears are added to the tale:

Never a sigh of passion or of pity,
Never a wail for weakness or for wrong,
Has not its archive in the angels' city,
Finds not its echo in the endless song.

Not as one blind and deaf to our beseeching,
Neither forgetful that we are but dust,

Not as from heavens too high for our
up-reaching,
Coldly sublime, intolerably just:—

Nay but thou knewest us, Lord Christ thou
knowest,
Well thou rememberest our feeble frame,
Thou canst conceive our highest and our
lowest,
Pulses of nobleness and aches of shame.

Therefore have pity!—not that we accuse
thee,
Curse thee and die and charge thee with
our woe:
Not thro' thy fault, o Holy One, we lose thee,
Nay, but our own,—yet hast thou made
us so!

Then tho' our foul and limitless transgression
Grows with our growing, with our breath
began,
Raise thou the arms of endless intercession,
Jesus, divinest when thou most art man!

Also I ask, but ever from the praying
Shrinks my soul backward, eager and afraid,
Point me the sum and shame of my betraying,
Show me, o Love, thy wounds which I have made!

Yes, thou forgivest, but with all forgiving
Canst not renew mine innocence again:
Make thou, o Christ, a dying of my living,
Purge from the sin but never from the pain!

So shall all speech of now and of to-morrow,
All he hath shown me or shall show me yet,
Spring from an infinite and tender sorrow,
Burst from a burning passion of regret:

Standing afar I summon you anigh him,
Yes, to the multitudes I call and say,
"This is my King! I preach and I deny him,
Christ! whom I crucify anew to-day."

Thou with strong prayer and very much entreating
Willest be asked, and thou shalt answer then,
Show the hid heart beneath creation beating,
Smile with kind eyes and be a man with men.

Were it not thus, o King of my salvation,
Many would curse to thee and I for one,
Fling thee thy bliss and snatch at thy damnation,
Scorn and abhor the shining of the sun,

Ring with a reckless shivering of laughter
Wroth at the woe which thou hast seen so long,
Question if any recompense hereafter
Waits to atone the intolerable wrong:

Is there not wrong too bitter for atoning?
What are these desperate and hideous years?

Hast thou not heard thy whole creation groaning,
Sighs of the bondsmen, and a woman's tears?

Yes, and to her, the beautiful and lowly,
Mary a maiden, separate from men,
Camest thou nigh and didst possess her wholly,
Close to thy saints, but thou wast closer then.

Once and for ever didst thou show thy chosen,
Once and for ever magnify thy choice;—
Scorched in love's fire or with his freezing frozen,
Lift up your hearts, ye humble, and rejoice!

Not to the rich he came or to the ruling,
(Men full of meat, whom wholly he abhors,)
Not to the fools grown insolent in fooling
Most, when the lost are dying at the doors;

Nay but to her who with a sweet thanksgiving
Took in tranquillity what God might bring,

Blessed him and waited, and within her living
Felt the arousal of a Holy Thing.

Ay for her infinite and endless honour
Found the Almighty in this flesh a tomb,
Pouring with power the Holy Ghost upon her,
Nothing disdainful of the Virgin's womb.

East the forefront of habitations holy
Gleamed to Engedi, shone to Eneglaim:
Softly thereout and from thereunder slowly
Wandered the waters, and delayed, and came.

Then the great stream, which having seen he showeth,
Hid from the wise but manifest to him,
Flowed and arose, as when Euphrates floweth,
Rose from the ankles till a man might swim.

Even with so soft a surge and an increasing,
Drunk of the sand and thwarted of the clod,
Stilled and astir and checked and never-ceasing
Spreadeth the great wave of the grace of God;

Bears to the marishes and bitter places
Healing for hurt and for their poisons balm,

Isle after isle in infinite embraces
Floods and enfolds and fringes with the palm.

Ay and afar to realms and to recesses
Seen in a storm, discovered in a dream,
Fields which no folk nor any power possesses,
Oceans ungirdled of the ocean-stream :—

Yes or if loose and free, as some are telling,
(Little I know it and I little care,)
This my poor lodge, my transitory dwelling,
Swings in the bright deep of the endless air,—

Round it and round his prophets shall proclaim him,
Springing thenceforth and hurrying there-thro',—
Each to the next the generations name him,
Honour unendingly and know anew.

Great were his fate who on the earth should
linger,
Sleep for an age and stir himself again,
Watching thy terrible and fiery finger
Shrivel the falsehood from the souls of
men.

Oh that thy steps among the stars would
quicken!
Oh that thine ears would hear when we
are dumb!
Many the hearts from which the hope shall
sicken,
Many shall faint before thy kingdom
come.

Lo for the dawn, (and wherefore wouldst
thou screen it?)
Lo with what eyes, how eager and alone,
Seers for the sight have spent themselves,
nor seen it,
Kings for the knowledge, and they have
not known.

Times of that ignorance with eyes that slumbered
Seeing he saw not, till the days that are,
Now, many multitudes whom none hath numbered,
Seek him and find him, for he is not far.

Ay and ere now, a triumph and a token,
Flown o'er the severance of the sundering deep,
Came there who called, and with the message spoken
Followed the wandering and the ways of sleep.

Ay and ere now above the shining city
Full of all knowledge and a God unknown
Stood I and spake, and passion of my pity
Drew him from heaven and showed him to his own.

Heard ye of her who faint beneath the burthen
Strained to the cross and in its shadow fell?

Love for a love, the angels' for the earthen,—
Ah, what a secret for the heavens to tell!

She as one wild, whom very stripes enharden,
Leapt many times from torture of a dream,
Shrank by the pallid olives of the garden,
Groves of a teacher, and Ilissus' stream:

Then to their temple Damaris would clamber,
Stood where an idol in the lifted sky
Bright in a light and eminent in amber
Heard not, nor pitied her, nor made reply.

Thence the strong soul, which never power can pinion,
Sprang with a wail into the empty air;
Thence the wide eyes upon a hushed dominion
Looked in a fierce astonishment of prayer:

Looked to Hymettus and the purple heather,
Looked to Peiræus and the purple sea,
Blending of waters and of winds together,
Winds that were wild and waters that were free.

So from the soft air, infinite and pearly,
Breathed a desire with which she could not cope,
Could not, methinks, so eager and so early,
Chant to her loveliness the dirge of hope;

Could not have done with weeping and with laughter
Leaving men angry and sweet love unknown;
Could not go forth upon a blank hereafter
Weak and a woman, aimless and alone.

Therefore with set face and with smiling bitter
Took she the anguish, carried it apart;—
Ah, to what friend to speak it? it were fitter
Thrust in the aching hollows of her heart.

Then I preached Christ: and when she heard the story,—
Oh, is such triumph possible to men?
Hardly, my King, had I beheld thy glory,
Hardly had known thine excellence till then.

Thou in one fold the afraid and the forsaken,—
Thou with one shepherding canst soothe and save;
Speak but the word! the Evangel shall awaken
Life in the lost, the hero in the slave.

Surely one star above all souls shall brighten
Leading for ever where the Lord is laid;
One revelation thro' all years enlighten
Steps of bewilderment and eyes afraid.

Us with no other gospel thou ensnarest,
Fiend from beneath or angel from above!
Knowing one thing the sacredest and fairest,—
Knowing there is not anything but Love.

Ay, and when Prophecy her tale hath finished,
Knowledge hath withered from the trembling tongue,
Love shall survive and Love be undiminished,
Love be imperishable, Love be young.

Love that bent low beneath his brother's burden,
How shall he soar and find all sorrows flown!
Love that ne'er asked for answer or for guerdon,
How shall he meet eyes sweeter than his own!

Love was believing,—and the best is truest;
Love would hope ever,—and the trust was gain;
Love that endured shall learn that thou renewest
Love, even thine, o Master! with thy pain.

Not in soft speech is told the earthly story,
Love of all Loves! that showed thee for an hour;
Shame was thy kingdom, and reproach thy glory,
Death thine eternity, the Cross thy power.

Oh to have watched thee thro' the vineyards wander,
Pluck the ripe ears, and into evening roam!—
Followed, and known that in the twilight yonder
Legions of angels shone about thy home!

Thunder the message that to me thou gavest;
Writ with the lightning in the skies it ran;
Shepherd of souls! it is not thus thou savest;
Nay, but with sorrows of the Son of Man.

Ah with what bitter triumph had I seen them,
Drops of redemption bleeding from thy brow!
Thieves, and a culprit crucified between them,
All men forsaking him,—and that was thou!

Yea, he arose, yet first he had descended,
Plunged like a man into the deep of birth;—
Have not we also with our glory blended
Night and dishonour and a weight of earth?

Let the trump sound! and from the spirit shaken,
See, this corruptible shall fade and fall;
Let the quick hear it and the sleepers waken,—
Changed in a moment, and the Lord in all!

Prophet and image of the Lord's transition,
Where shall ye wait us, whither will ye tend?—
Moses, Elias, on the Mount of Vision
Shown with eyes silent, wist ye of the end?

Changed and the same and lost and rearisen,
What is the secret that ye fain would say?
Souls paradisal to the souls in prison
Speak but a word while it is called To-day:

Oft when the Word is on me to deliver
Lifts the illusion and the truth lies bare;
Desert or throng, the city or the river,
Melts in a lucid Paradise of air,—

Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,—
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented in a show of things;—

Then with a rush the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call,—
Oh to save these! to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all!

Once for the least of children of Manasses
God had a message and a deed to do,
Wherefore the welcome that all speech surpasses
Called him and hailed him greater than he knew;

Asked him no more, but followed him and found him,
Filled him with valour, slung him with a sword,
Bade him go on until the tribes around him
Mingled his name with naming of the Lord.

Also of John a calling and a crying
Rang in Bethabara by Jordan's flow;
Art thou the Christ? they asked of his denying;
Art thou that Prophet? and he answered, No.

John, than which man a sadder or a greater
Not till this day has been of woman born,

John like some lonely peak by the Creator
Fired with the red glow of the rushing morn.

This when the sun shall rise and overcome it
Stands in his shining desolate and bare,
Yet not the less the inexorable summit
Flamed him his signal to the happier air.

So with the Lord: he takes and he refuses,
Finds him ambassadors whom men deny,
Wise ones nor mighty for his saints he chooses,
No, such as John or Gideon or I.

He as he wills shall solder and shall sunder,
Slay in a day and quicken in an hour,
Tune him a music from the Sons of Thunder,
Forge and transform my passion into power.

Ay, for this Paul, a scorn and a despising,
Weak as you know him and the wretch you see,—
Even in these eyes shall ye behold him rising,
Strength in infirmities and Christ in me.

Often for me between the shade and splendour
Ceos and Tenedos at dawn were grey;
Welling of waves, disconsolate and tender,
Sighed on the shore and waited for the day.

Then till the bridegroom from the east advancing
Smote him a waterway and flushed the lawn,
God with sweet strength, with terror, and with trancing,
Spake in the purple mystery of dawn.

Oh what a speech, and greater than our learning!
Scarcely remembrance can the joy renew:
What were they then, the sights of our discerning,
Sorrows we suffer, and the deeds we do?

Lo every one of them was sunk and swallowed,
Morsels and motes in the eternal sea;
Far was the call, and farther as I followed
Grew there a silence round the Lord and me.

Oh could I tell ye surely would believe it!
Oh could I only say what I have seen!
How should I tell or how can ye receive it,
How, till he bringeth you where I have been?

Therefore, o Lord, I will not fail nor falter,
Nay but I ask it, nay but I desire,
Lay on my lips thine embers of the altar,
Seal with the sting and furnish with the fire;

Give me a voice, a cry and a complaining,—
Oh let my sound be stormy in their ears!
Throat that would shout but cannot stay for straining,
Eyes that would weep but cannot wait for tears.

Quick in a moment, infinite for ever,
Send an arousal better than I pray,
Give me a grace upon the faint endeavour,
Souls for my hire and Pentecost to-day!

Lo as some bard on isles of the Aegean
Lovely and eager when the earth was young,
Burning to hurl his heart into a paean,
Praise of the hero from whose loins he sprung;—

He, I suppose, with such a care to carry,
Wandered disconsolate and waited long,
Smiting his breast, wherein the notes would tarry,
Chiding the slumber of the seed of song:

Then in the sudden glory of a minute
Airy and excellent the proëm came,
Rending his bosom, for a god was in it,
Waking the seed, for it had burst in flame.

So even I athirst for his inspiring,
I who have talked with him forget again;
Yes, many days with sobs and with desiring
Offer to God a patience and a pain;

Then thro' the mid complaint of my confession,
Then thro' the pang and passion of my prayer,
Leaps with a start the shock of his possession,
Thrills me and touches, and the Lord is there.

Lo if some pen should write upon your rafter
Mene and mene in the folds of flame,
Think ye could any memories thereafter
Wholly retrace the couplet as it came ?

Lo if some strange intelligible thunder
Sang to the earth the secret of a star,
How should ye catch, for terror and for wonder,
Shreds of the story that was pealed so far ?

Scarcely I catch the words of his revealing,
Hardly I hear him, dimly understand,
Only the Power that is within me pealing
Lives on my lips and beckons to my hand.

Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt him nor deny:
Yea with one voice, o world, tho' thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.

God, who at sundry times in manners many
Spake to the fathers and is speaking still,
Eager to find if ever or if any
Souls will obey and hearken to his will;—

Who that one moment has the least descried him,
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Doth not despise all excellence beside him,
Pleasures and powers that are not and that are,—

Ay amid all men bear himself thereafter
Smit with a solemn and a sweet surprise,
Dumb to their scorn and turning on their laughter
Only the dominance of earnest eyes?—

God, who whatever frenzy of our fretting
Vexes sad life to spoil and to destroy,
Lendeth an hour for peace and for forgetting,
Setteth in pain the jewel of his joy:—

Gentle and faithful, tyrannous and tender,
Ye that have known Him, is He sweet to know?

Softly he touches, for the reed is slender,
Wisely enkindles, for the flame is low.

God, who when Enoch from the earth was hidden
Saved him from death and Noe from the sea,
Chose him a people for his purpose bidden,
Found in Chaldaea the elect Chaldee,—

God, who his promise thro' the ages keeping
Called him from Charran, summoned him from Ur,
Gave to his wife a laughter and a weeping,
Light to the nations and a son for her,—

God, who in Israel's bondage and bewailing
Heard them and granted them their heart's desire,
Clave them the deep with power and with prevailing,
Gloomed in the cloud and glowed into the fire,

Fed them with manna, furnished with a fountain,
Followed with waves the raising of the rod,
Drew them and drave, till Moses on the mountain
Died of the kisses of the lips of God;—

God, who was not in earth when it was shaken,
Could not be found in fury of the flame,
Then to his seer, the faithful and forsaken,
Softly was manifest and spake by name,

Showed him a remnant barred from the betrayal,
Close in his Carmel, where the caves are dim,
So many knees that had not bent to Baal,
So many mouths that had not kissèd him,—

God, who to glean the vineyard of his choosing
Sent them evangelists till day was done,
Bore with the churls, their wrath and their refusing,
Gave at the last the glory of his Son:—

Lo as in Eden when the days were seven
Pison thro' Havilah that softly ran
Bare on his breast the changes of the heaven,
Felt on his shores the silence of a man:

Silence, for Adam, when the day departed
Left him in twilight with his charge to keep,

Careless and confident and single-hearted
Trusted in God and turned himself to sleep:

Then in the midnight stirring in his slumber
Opened his vision on the heights and saw
New without name or ordinance or number,
Set for a marvel, silent for an awe,

Stars in the firmament above him beaming,
Stars in the firmament, alive and free,
Stars, and of stars the innumerable streaming,
Deep in the deeps, a river in the sea;—

These as he watched thro' march of their arising,
Many in multitudes and one by one,
Somewhat from God with a superb surprising
Breathed in his eyes the promise of the sun.

So tho' our Daystar from our sight be taken,
Gone from his brethren, hidden from his own,
Yet in his setting are we not forsaken,
Suffer not shadows of the dark alone.

Not in the west is thine appearance ended,
Neither from dark shall thy renewal be,

Lo, for the firmament in spaces splendid
Lighteth her beacon-fires ablaze for thee;—

Holds them and hides and drowns them and discovers,
Throngs them together, kindles them afar,
Sheweth, o Love, thy multitude of lovers,
Souls that shall know thee and the saints that are.

Look what a company of constellations!
Say can the sky so many lights contain?
Hath the great earth these endless generations?
Are there so many purified thro' pain?

Witness the wonder when thy saints assembled
Waited the message, and the message came;
Ay with hearts tremulous and house that trembled,
Ay with the Paraclete that fell in flame.

Witness the men whom with a word he gaineth,
Bold who were base and voiceful who were dumb:—

Battle, I know, so long as life remaineth,
Battle for all, but these have overcome.

Witness the women, of his children sweetest,—
Scarcely earth seeth them but earth shall see,—
Thou in their woe thine agony completest,
Christ, and their solitude is nigh to thee.

What is this psalm from pitiable places
Glad where the messengers of peace have trod?
Whose are these beautiful and holy faces
Lit with their loving and aflame with God?

Eager and faint, empassionate and lonely,
These in their hour shall prophesy again:
This is his will who hath endured, and only
Sendeth the promise where he sends the pain.

Ay unto these distributeth the Giver
Sorrow and sanctity, and loves them well,
Grants them a power and passion to deliver
Hearts from the prison-house and souls from hell.

Thinking hereof I wot not if the portal
Opeth already to my Lord above:

Lo there is no more mortal and immortal,
Nought is on earth or in the heavens but love.

Surely he cometh, and a thousand voices
Call to the saints and to the deaf are dumb;
Surely he cometh, and the earth rejoices
Glad in his coming who hath sworn, I come.

This hath he done and shall we not adore him?
This shall he do and can we still despair?
Come let us quickly fling ourselves before him,
Cast at his feet the burthen of our care,

Flash from our eyes the glow of our thanksgiving,
Glad and regretful, confident and calm,
Then thro' all life and what is after living
Thrill to the tireless music of a psalm.

Yea thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning
He shall suffice me, for he hath sufficed:
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

THE RENEWAL OF YOUTH AND OTHER POEMS

[First published 1882]

PART I

THE TRANSLATION OF FAITH[1]

I

High in the midst the pictured Pentecost
Showed in a sign the coming of the Ghost,
And round about were councils blazoned
Called by the Fathers in a day long dead,
Who once therein, as well the limner paints,
Upbuilt the faith delivered to the saints.

Without the council-hall, in dawning day,
The mass of men had left a narrow way
Where ever-burning lamps enlock the tomb
In golden glamour and in golden gloom.
There on the earth is peace, and in the air
An aspiration of eternal prayer;
So many a man in immemorial years
Has scarcely seen that image for his tears,
So oft have women found themselves alone
With Christ and Mary on the well-worn stone.

[1] Public Session of the Œcumenical Council, in St. Peter's, Rome, January 6, Feast of the Epiphany, 1870.

Thereby the conclave of the bishops went,
With grave brows cherishing a dim intent,
As men who travelled on their eve of death
From every shore that man inhabiteth,
Not knowing wherefore, for the former things
Fade from old eyes of bishops and of kings.

With crimson raiment one from Bozrah came,
On brow and breast the rubies flashed in flame;
And this from Tyre, from Tunis that, and he
From Austral islands and the Austral sea;—
And many a swarthy face and stern was there,
And many a man who knows deep things and rare,
Knows the Chaldaic and the Coptic rite,
The Melchian-Greek and Ebio-Maronite,
Strange words of men who speak from long ago,
Lived not our lives, but what we know not know.

And some there were who never shall disdain
The Orders of their poverty and pain;
Amidst all pomp preferring for their need
The simple cowl and customary weed,—
Some white and Carmelite, and some alway
In gentle habit of Franciscan grey.

And lo, the sovereign Pontiff, Holy Sire,
Fulfilled anew the Catholic desire;—
Beneath the scroll of Peter's charge unfurled
He sat him at the centre of the world,
Attending till the deeds of God began,
And the One Sacrifice was slain for man.

But yet to me was granted to behold
A greater glory than the Pontiff's gold;—
To my purged eyes before the altar lay
A figure dreamlike in the noon of day;
Nor changed the still face, nor the look thereon,
At ending of the endless antiphon,
Nor for the summoned saints and holy hymn
Grew to my sight less delicate and dim:—
How faint, how fair that immaterial wraith!
But, looking long, I saw that she was Faith.

II

Last in the midst of all a patriarch came,
Whose nation none durst ask him, nor his name,
Yet 'mid the Eastern sires he seemed as one
Fire-nurtured at the springing of the sun,
And in robe's tint was likest-hued to them
Who wear the Babylonian diadem.
His brows black yet and white unfallen hair
Set in strange frame the face of his despair,
And I despised not, nor can God despise,

The silent splendid anger of his eyes.
A hundred years of search for flying Truth
Had left them glowing with no gleam of youth,
A hundred years of vast and vain desire
Had lit and filled them with consuming fire;
Therethrough I saw his fierce eternal soul
Gaze from beneath that argent aureole;
I saw him bow his hoar majestic head,
I heard him, and he murmured, "Faith is dead."

Through arch and avenue the rumour ran,
Shed from the mighty presence of the man;
Through arch and avenue and vault and aisle
He cast the terror of his glance awhile,
Then rose at once and spake with hurrying breath,
As one who races with a racing Death.

"How long ago our fathers followed far
That false flame of the visionary star!
Oh better, better had it been for them
To have perished on the edge of Bethlehem,
Or ere they saw the comet stoop and stay,
And knew the shepherds, and became as they!
Better for us to have been, as men may be,
Sages and silent by the Eastern sea,
Than thus in new delusion to have brought

Myrrh of our prayer, frankincense of our thought,
For One whom knowing not we held so dear,
For One who sware it, but who is not here.
Better for you, this shrine when ye began,
An earthquake should have hidden it from man,
Than thus through centuries of pomp and pain
To have founded and have finished it in vain,—
To have vainly arched the labyrinthine shade,
And vainly vaulted it, and vainly made
For saints and kings an everlasting home
High in the dizzying glories of the dome.
Since not one minute over hall or Host
Flutters the peerless presence of the Ghost,
Nor falls at all, for art or man's device,
On mumbled charm and mumming sacrifice,—
But either cares not, or forspent with care
Has flown into the infinite of air.

Apollo left you when the Christ was born,
Jehovah when the temple's veil was torn,
And now, even now, this last time and again,
The presence of a God has gone from men.
Live in your dreams, if ye must live, but I
Will find the light, and in the light will die."

III

At that strange speech the sons of men amazed
Each on the other tremulously gazed,
When lo, herself,—herself the age to close,—
From where she lay the very Faith arose;
She stood as never she shall stand again,
And for an instant manifest to men:—
In figure like the Mother-maid who sees
The deepest heart of hidden mysteries,
On that strange night when from her eyes she shed
A holy glory on the painter's bed,
And Agnes and the angels hushed awhile,
Won by her sadness sweeter than a smile.
Such form she wore, nor yet henceforth will care
That form, or form at all, on earth to wear;
For those sweet eyes, which once, with flag unfurled,
So many a prince would follow through the world,—
That face, the light of dreams, the crown of day,
Lo, while we looked on her, was rapt away;
O mystic end and o evanished queen!
When shall we see thee as our sires have seen?

And yet, translated from the Pontiff's side,
She did not die, o say not that she died!

She died not, died not, o the faint and fair!
She could not die, but melted into air.

In that high dome I neither know nor say
What Power and Presence was alive that day,
No, nor what Faith, in what transfigured form,
Rode on the ghostly spaces of the storm:
For sight of eyes nor ear with hearing knew
That windless wind that where it listed blew;
Yet seeing eyes and ears that hear shall be
As dust and nothingness henceforth for me,
Who once have felt the blowing Spirit roll
Life on my life, and on my soul a Soul.

And first the conclave and the choir, and then
The immeasurable multitude of men,
Bowed and fell down, bowed and fell down, as though
A rushing mighty wind had laid them low;
Yea to all hearts a revelation came,
As flying thunder and as flying flame;
A moment then the vault above him seemed
To each man as the heaven that he had dreamed;
A moment then the floor whereon he trod
Became the pavement of the courts of God;
And in the aisles was silence, in the dome
Silence, and no man knew that it was Rome.

ROME, *Jan.* 7, 1870.

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

O Jesus, if one minute, if one hour
Thou wouldst come hitherward and speak with John!
Nay, but be present only, nay, but come:
And I shall look, and as I look on thee
Find in thine eyes the answer and the end.

And I am he who once in Nazareth,
A child, nor knowing yet the prophet's woe,
In childly fashion sought thee, and even then
Perceived a mute withdrawal, open eyes
That drooped not for caressing, brows that knew
Dominion, and the babe already king.

Ah Mary, but thou also, thou as I,
With eager tremulous humilities,
With dumb appeal and tears that dared not flow,
Hast laid thy loving arms about the boy,
And clasped him wistfully and felt him far.

And ever as I grew his loveliness
Grew with me, and the yearning turned to pain.

Then said I,—" Nay, my friends, no need
is now
For John to tarry with you; I have seen,
I have known him; I go hence, and all alone
I carry Jesus with me till I die."

And that same day, being past the
Passover,
I gat me to the desert, and stayed to see
Joseph and Mary holding each a hand
Of one that followed meekly; and I was
gone,
And with strange beasts in the great wilder-
ness
I laid me, fearing nothing, and hardly knew
On what rough meat in what unwonted ways
I throve, or how endured the frost and fire;
But moaned and carried in my heart for him
A first and holy passion, boy for boy,
And loved the hills that look on Nazareth
And every fount that pours upon the plain.

Then once with trembling knees and
heart afire
I ran, I sought him: but my Lord at home
Bright in the full face of the dawning day
Stood at his carpentry, and azure air
Inarched him, scattered with the glittering
green:
I saw him standing, I saw his face, I saw
His even eyebrows over eyes grey-blue,

From whence with smiling there looked out
on me
A welcome and a wonder,—"Mine so
soon?"—
Ah me, how sweet and unendurable
Was that confronting beauty of the boy!
Jesus, thou knowest I had no answer then,
But leapt without a word, and flung away,
And dared not think thereof, and looked no
more.

And after that with wonder rose in me
Strange speech of early prophets, and a tale
First learnt and last forgotten, song that fell
With worship from the lonely Israelites,
Simeon and Anna; for these twain as one
Fast by the altar and in the courts of God
Led a long age in fair expectancy.
For all about them swept the heedless folk,
Unholy folk and market merchandise,
They each from each took courage, and with
prayer
Made ready for the coming of a King.
So, when the waves of Noe on forest and hill
Ran ruinous, and all herbs had lost the life
Of greenness and the memory of air,
The cedar-trees alone on Lebanon
Spread steadfastly invulnerable arms.

That was no sleep when clear the vision
came,

Bright in the night and truer than the day:—
For there with brows newborn and locks that flew
Was Adam, and his eyes remembered God;
And Eve, already fallen, already in woe,
Knowing a sweeter promise for the pain;
And after these, unknown, unknowable,
The grave gigantic visage of dead men,
With looks that are not ours, with speech to say
That no man dares interpret; then I saw
A maiden such as countrymen afield
Greet reverently, and love her as they see;
And after that a boy with face so fair,
With such a glory and a wonder in it,
I grieved to find him born upon the earth
To man's life and the heritage of sin;
And last of all that Mary whom I knew
Stood with such parted lips and face aglow
As long-since when the angel came to her;
And all these pointed forward, and I knew
That each was prophet and singer and sire and seer,
That each was priest and mother and maid and king,
With longing for the babe of Nazareth,
For that man-child who should be born and reign.

And once again I saw him, in latter days
Fraught with a deeper meaning, for he came

To my baptizing, and the infinite air
Blushed on his coming, and all the earth was still;
Gently he spake; I answered; God from heaven
Called, and I hardly heard him, such a love
Streamed in that orison from man to man.
Then shining from his shoulders either-way
Fell the flood Jordan, and his kingly eyes
Looked in the east, and star-like met the sun.
Once in no manner of similitude,
And twice in thunderings and thrice in flame,
The Highest ere now hath shown him secretly;
But when from heaven the visible Spirit in air
Came verily, lighted on him, was alone,
Then knew I, then I said it, then I saw
God in the voice and glory of a man.

And one will say, "And wilt thou not forget
The unkindly king that hath forgotten thee?"
Nay, I remember; like my sires who sat
Faithful and stubborn by Euphrates' stream,
Nor in their age forgot Jerusalem,
Nor reared their children for another joy.

O Jesus, if thou knewest, if thou couldst know,

How in my heart through sleep and pain and
prayer
Thy royalty remaineth; how thy name
Falls from my lips unbidden, and the dark
Is thick with lying shades that are not
thou,—
Couldst thou imagine it, O tender soul!
At least in vision thou wouldst come to me;
I should not only hear of dumb that sing
And lame that leap around thee, and all thy
ways
Joyful, and on thy breast another John.

How should I not remember? Is dusk
of day
Forgetful, or the winter of the sun?
Have these another glory? or whom have I
In all the world but Jesus for my love?
Whereinsoever breath may rise and die
Their generations follow on, and earth
Each in their kind replenisheth anew,
Only like him she bears not nor hath borne
One in her endless multitude of men.

And these were ever about me; morn by
morn
Mine eyes again desired him, and I saw
The throngingHebrews thicken, and my heart
Sank, and the prophet served another day.

Yet sometimes when by chance the rulers
came,

Encharnelled in their fatness, men that smile,
Sit in high seats, and swell with their desire,
My strong limbs shook, and my heart leapt and fell
With passion of sheer scorn, with speech that slew,
With glances that among them running dealt
Damnation, as on Egypt ran the flame.
For such men never when I look on them
Can keep their pride or smiling, but their brow
Droops from its base dominion, and their voice
Rings hollower with a stirring fear within,
Till flushes chill to paleness, and at length
From self-convicted eyes evanisheth
The false and fickle lumour of their joy.

For quick and fitfully with feast and song
Men make a tumult round them, and console
With sudden sport a momentary woe;
But if thou take one hence, and set him down
In some strange jeopardy on enormous hills,
Or swimming at night alone upon the sea,
His lesser life falls from him, and the dream
Is broken which had held him unaware,
And with a shudder he feels his naked soul
In the great black world face to face with God.

This also for that miserable man
Is a worse trouble than his heart can know,
That in the strait and sodden ways of sin
He has made him alien to the plenteous day,
Cut off from friendliness with woods that wave
And happy pasture and carousing sea,
And whatsoever loving things enjoy
Simply the kind simplicity of God.
For these are teachers; not in vain His seers
Have dwelt in solitudes and known that God
High up in open silence and thin air
More presently reveals him, having set
His chiefest temples on the mountain-tops,
His kindling altar in the hearts of men.
And these I knew with peace and lost with pain,
And oft for whistling wind and desert air
Lamented, and in dreams was my desire
For the flood Jordan, for the running sound
And broken glitters of the midnight moon.
But now all this fades from me, and the life
Of prophecy, and summers that I knew.
Yea, and though once I looked on many men
And spake them sweet and bitter speech, and heard
Such secrets as a tempest of the soul
Once in a lifetime washes black and bare
From desperate recesses of shut sin,
Yet all is quite forgotten, and to-day
From the strange past no sign remains with me

But simple and tremendous memories
Of morning and of even and of God.

Ah me, ah me, for if a man desire
Gold or great wealth or marriage with a maid,
How easily he wins her, having served
Seven years perchance, and counting that for gain;
But whoso wants God only and lets life go,
Seeks him with sorrow, and pursues him far,
And finds him weeping, and in no long time
Again the High and Unapproachable
Evanishing escapeth, and that man
Forgets the life and struggle of the soul,
Falls from his hope, and dreams it was a dream.

Yet back again perforce with sorrow and shame
Who once hath known him must return, nor long
Can cease from loving, nor endures alone
The dreadful interspace of dreams and day,
Once quick with God; nor is content as those
Who look into each other's eyes and seek
To find one strong enough to uphold the earth,
Or sweet enough to make it heaven: aha,
Whom seek they or whom find? for in all the world
There is none but thee, my God, there is none but thee.

And this it is that links together as one
The sad continual companies of men;
Not that the old earth stands, and Ararat
Endureth, and Euphrates till to-day
Remembers where God walked beside the stream;
Nay rather that souls weary and hearts afire
Have everywhere besought him, everywhere
Have found and found him not; and age to age,
Though all else pass and fail, delivereth
At least the great tradition of their God.

For even thus on Ur and Mahanaim
By Asian rivers gathering to the sea,
When the huge stars shone gold, and dim and still
Dewed in the dusk the innocent yearlings lay,
With constant eyes the serious shepherd-men
Renewed the old desiring, sought again
The mute eternal Presence; and for these
Albeit sometimes the sundering firmament
One moment to no bodily sense revealed
Unspeakably an imminence of love;—
Yet by no song have our forefathers known
To set the invisible in sight of men,
Nor in all years have any wisdom found
But patient hope and dumb humility.

Yea, Lord, I know it, teach me yet anew
With what a fierce and patient purity
I must confront the horror of the world.

For very little space on either hand
Parts the sane mind from madness; very soon
By the intenser pressure of one thought
Or clearer vision of one agony
The soothfast reason trembles, all things fade
In blackness, and the demon enters in.—
I would I never may be left of thee,
O God, my God, in whatsoever ill;
Be present while thou strikest, thus shall grow
At least a solemn patience with the pain;—
When thou art gone, what is there in the world
Seems not dishonoured, desperate with sin?
The stars are threatful eyeballs, and the air
Hangs thick and heavy with the wrath of God,
And even pure pity in my heart congeals
To idle anger with thy ways and thee,
Nor any care for life remains to me,
Nor trust in love, nor fellowship with men,
But past my will the exasperated brain
Thinks bitter thoughts, and I no more am John.

It is not when man's heart is nighest heaven
He hath most need of servant-seraphim,—
Albeit that height be holy and God be still,
And lifted up he dies with his desire,

That only once the Highest for dear love's sake
Would set himself in whispers of a man:—
Nay, but much rather when one flat on earth
Knows not which way to grovel, or where to flee
From the overmastering agony of sin,
Then his deed tears him till he find one pure
To know it and forgive: "For God," saith he,
"Still on the unjust sends unchangeable
These scornful boons of summer and of rain,
And howsoever I fall, with dawn and day
Floods me, and splendidly ignores my sin."

And how should pity and anger cease, or shame
Have done with blushes, till the prophet know
That God not yet hath quite despaired of men?
Oh that the heavens were rent and one came down
Who saw men's hurt with kindlier eyes than mine,
Fiercelier than I resented every wrong,
Sweated more painful drops than these that flow
In nightly passion for my people's sin,—
Died with it, lived beyond it,—nay, what now?
If this indeed were Jesus, this the Lamb

Whom age by age the temple-sacrifice
Not vainly had prefigured, and if so
In one complete and sacred agony
He lifted all the weight of all the world,—
And if men knew it, and if men clung to him
With desperate love and present memory,—
I know not how,—till all things fail in fire;
That were enough, and, o my God, for them,
For them there might be peace, but not for me.

And even Elias often on the hills
Towered in a flaming sunset, sick at heart;
Often with bare breast on the dewy earth
Lay all night long, and all night comfortless
Poured his abounding bitterness of soul:
I know that not without a wail he bore
The solitude of prophets till that day
When death divine and unbelievable
Blazed in the radiant chariot and blown fire,
Whereof the very memory melts mine eyes
And holds my heart with wonder: can it be
That thus obscurely to his ministers
Jehovah portioneth eternal love?

Here in the hazardous joy of woman and man
Consider with how sad and eager eyes
They lean together, and part, and gaze again,
Regretting that they cannot in so brief time,
With all that sweet abandonment, outpour

Their flowing infinity of tenderness.
God's fashion is another; day by day
And year by year he tarrieth; little need
The Lord should hasten; whom he loves the most
He seeks not oftenest, nor wooes him long,
But by denial quickens his desire,
And in forgetting best remembers him,
Till that man's heart grows humble and reaches out
To the least glimmer of the feet of God,
Grass on the mountain-tops, or the early note
Of wild birds in the hush before the day,—
Wherever sweetly in the ends of the earth
Are fragments of a peace that knows not man.

Then on our utter weakness and the hush
Of hearts exhausted that can ache no more,
On such abeyance of self and swoon of soul
The Spirit hath lighted oft, and let men see
That all our vileness alters God no more
Than our dimmed eyes can quench the stars in heaven:—
From years ere years were told, through all the sins,
Unknown sins of innumerable men,
God is himself for ever, and shows to-day
As erst in Eden, the eternal hope.

Wherefore if anywise from morn to morn
I can endure a weary faithfulness,

From minute unto minute calling low
On God who once would answer, it may be
He hath a waking for me, and some surprise
Shall from this prison set the captive free
And love from fears and from the flesh the soul.

For even thus beside Gennesaret
In solemn night some demon-haunted man
Runs from himself, and nothing knows in heaven
But blackness, yet around him unaware
With standing hills and high expectancy,
With early airs and shuddering and calm,
The enormous morning quickens, and lake and tree
Perceive each other dimly in a dream:
And when at last with bodily frame forspent
He throws him on the beach to sleep or die,
That very moment rises full and fair
Thy sun, o Lord, the sun that brings the day.

I wait it; I have spoken; even now
This hour may set me in one place with God.
I hear a wantoning in Herod's hall,
And feet that seek me; very oft some chance
Leaps from the folly and the wine of kings;—
O Jesus, spirit and spirit, soul and soul,—
O Jesus, I shall seek thee, I shall find,
My love, my master, find thee, though I be
Least, as I know, of all men woman-born.

AMMERGAU [1]

I

"WHERE is he gone? O men and maidens, where
Is gone the fairest amid all the fair?
Mine eyes desire him, and with dawning day
My heart goes forth to find him on the way."

Ah, how that music lingers, and again
Returns the dying sweetness of the strain!
How clearly on my inner sense is borne
The fair fresh beauty of the mountain morn,
And cries of flocks afar, and mixed with these
The green delightful tumult of the trees,—
The birds that o'er us from the upper day
Threw flitting shade, and went their airy way,—
The bright-robed chorus and the silent throng,
And that first burst and sanctity of song!

In such a place with eager faces fair
Sat men of old in bright Athenian air,

[1] Celebration of the Passion-Play at Ober-Ammergau, in Bavaria, June 25, 1870.

Heard in such wise the folk of Theseus sing
Their welcome to the world-forsaken king,—
Awaited thus between the murmuring trees
The whisper of appeased Eumenides,
Till breath came thick and eyes no more could see
For sweet prevision of the end to be.

But ah, how hard a task to set again
The living Christ among the homes of men!
Have we not grown too faithless or too wise
For this old tale of many mysteries?
Will not this passion of the peasants seem
Like children's tears for terror of a dream?—

"Hosanna! whoso in the Highest Name,
Hosanna! cometh as Elias came,
Him Israel hails and honours, Israel showers
Before him all her hopes and all her flowers."—

O Son of God! O blessed vision, stay!
O be my whole life centred in to-day!
Ah, let me dream that this indeed is He,
Mine eyes desired Him, and at last they see!
Then as some loving wife, whose lord has come
Wounded but safe from a far battle home,
Yet must before the day's declining go
On a like quest against another foe,—
With throbbing breast his kingly voice she hears

Her eager gaze is dazzled with her tears,
Nor clearly can she place his tales apart
For the overwhelming passion of her heart,
For joy and love, for pity and for pain,
For thinking "He is come, he goes again!"—
In such confusion of the soul I saw
Their mighty pictures of the vanished Law,
Which, as they held, that Law to Gospel bound
With mystic meaning and design profound:—
Joseph by Dothan and the shepherd's well,
Tobias in the hand of Raphael,—
The crowding people who with joy descry
The food of angels fluttering from the sky;—
Ah, sweet that still upon this earth should be
So many simple souls in holy glee,
Such maids and men, unknowing shame or guile,
Whose whole bright nature beams into a smile!

Thro' all these scenes the fateful story ran,
And the grave presence of the Son of Man:
There was the evening feast, remembered long,
The mystic act and sacramental song;
There was the dreadful garden, rock and tree,
Waker and sleepers in Gethsemane;—
The selfsame forms that I so oft had seen

Shrined the portcullis and the rose between,
When heaven's cold light in cheerless afternoon
Changed while we knelt from sun to ghostly moon.

And one there was who on his deeds could draw
A gaze that half was horror, half was awe,
Who when the supper of the Lord was spread
Drank of the cup and ate the broken bread,
And then, with night without him and within,
Went forth and sinned the unutterable sin.
Better if never on his ways had shone
The Light which is men's life to look upon;
If he had worn a torpid age away
In the poor gains and pleasures of the day,
From toil to toil had been content to go,
Nor ever aim so high or fall so low!
But, when he saw the Christ, he thought to fly
His own base self and selfish misery;
He trusted that before those heavenly eyes
All shameful thoughts were as a dream that dies,
And new life opened on him, great and free,
And love on earth and paradise to be.
But ah! thro' all men some base impulse runs,
(The brute the father and the men the sons,)

Which if one harshly sets him to subdue,
With fiercer insolence it boils anew :
He ends the worst who with best hope began :
How hard is this ! how like the lot of man !
When this man's best desire and highest aim
Had ended in the deed of traitorous shame,
When to his bloodshot eyes grew wild and dim
The stony faces of the Sanhedrim,—
When in his rage he could no longer bear
Men's voices nor the sunlight nor the air,
Nor sleep, nor waking, nor his own quick breath,
Nor God in heaven, nor anything but death,—
I bowed my head, and through my fingers ran
Tears for the end of that Iscariot man,
Lost in the hopeless struggle of the soul
To make the done undone, the broken whole.

O brother ! howsoever, wheresoe'er
Thou hidest now the hell of thy despair,
Hear that one heart can pity, one can know
With thee thy hopeless solitary woe.

But when the treacherous deed was planned and done,
The soldiers gathered, and the shame begun,
Thereat the indignant heavens in fierce disdain

Blew down a rushing and uproarious rain;
The tall trees wailed; ill-heard and scarcely seen
Were Jew and Roman those rough gusts between,
Only unmoved one still and towering form
Made, as of old, a silence in the storm.
Then was the cross uplifted; strange to see
That final sign of sad humanity;
For men in childhood for their worship chose
The primal force by which as men they rose;
Then round their homes they bade with boyish grace
The hanging Bacchus swing his comely face;
And now, grown old, they can no more disdain
To look full-front upon the eyes of Pain,
But must all corners of the champaign fill
With bleeding images of this last ill,
Must on yon mountain's pinnacle enshrine
A crucifix, the dead for the divine.

Yet never picture, wonderfully well
By hands of Dürer drawn or Raphael,
Nor wood by shepherds that one art who know
Carved in long nights behind the drifted snow,
Could with such holy sorrows flood and fill
The eyes made glimmering and the heart made still,

As that pale form whose outstretched limbs so long
Made kingship of the infamy of wrong,
O'er whose thorn-twined majestic brows ran down
Blood for anointing from the bitter crown.
Then from the lips of David's Son there brake
Such phrase as David in the Spirit spake,—
Ay, and four words with such a meaning fraught
As seemed an answer to my inmost thought;—
O dreadful cry, and by no seer foreshewn,
"My God, my God, I die and am alone!"

Where is he gone? O men and maidens, where
Is gone the fairest amid all the fair?
Mine eyes desire him, and with dawning day
My heart goes forth to find him on the way.

II

I, having seen, for certain days apart
Fared with a silent memory at my heart,
And in me great compassion grew for them
Who looked upon that feigned Jerusalem,
For I and all those thousands seemed to be
Like other thousands once in Galilee,
Save that no miracle's divine surprise
Met in the desert our expectant eyes,

No answer calmed our eager hearts enticed
By the mere name and very look of Christ.

So fondly in all ages man will cling
To the least shadow of a Friend and King,
To the faint hope of one to share, to know
The aspiration and the inner woe,—
Forgetting that the several souls of men
Are not like parted drops which meet again
When the tree shakes and to each other run
The kindred crystals glittering into one,—
But like those twin revolving stars which bear
A double solitude thro' the utmost air ;
For these, albeit their lit immingled rays
Be living beryl, living chrysoprase,
Tho' burning orb on orb shall whirl and throw
Her amethystine and her golden glow,
Yet must they still their separate pathways keep
And sad procession thro' the eternal deep,
Apart, together, must for ever roll
Round a void centre to an unknown goal.

And thus I mused, and as men's musings will
Come round at last to their own sorrows still,
So mine, who in such words as these began
To mourn the solitary fate of man.

" Thou, Virgil, too, wouldst gladly have been laid

In forest-arches of Thessalian shade,
Or on Laconian lawns have watched all day
The fleet and fair Laconian maidens play,
Till from the rustling of the leaves was shed
Deep sleep upon thy limbs and kingly head,
And Mother Earth diffused with calm control
Peace on her sweetest and her saddest soul.
There 'mid the peasants thou hadst dwelt with joy
The goatherd or the reaper or the boy,
Hadst changed thy fate for theirs, if change could be,
And given for love thy sad supremacy.

"Wert thou not wise, my Master? better far
To live with them and be as these men are;
Better 'mid Phyllis and Lycoris set,—
Their soft eyes darker than the violet,—
With them to smile and sing, for them to bear
The lover's anguish and the fond despair,
Than thus to feel, for ever and forlorn,
The passions set new-risen and die newborn.

"For some men linger in their loves, but I
So soon have finished and so fast go by;
Nay, nor in answering gaze of friends can find
The one soul looking through the double mind:

I love them, but beneath their tenderest tone
This lonely heart is not the less alone;
I love them, but betwixt their souls and me
Are shadowy mountains and a sounding sea.

" Oh heart that oftentimes wouldst gladly win
The whole world's love thy narrow walls within,
Wouldst answer speech with silence, sighs with sighs,
Tears with the effluence of enchanted eyes,—
Then oftentimes in bitterness art fain
To cast that love to the four winds again,
For indignation at the gulfs that bar
For ever soul from soul as star from star!
Sweet are the looks and words, the sigh and kiss,
But can the live soul live by these or this?—
From her sad temple she beholds in vain
The close caresses and the yearning strain;—
Who reaches, who attains her? who has known
Her queenly presence and her tender tone?
What brush has painted, or what song has sung
Her unbetrothèd beauty ever-young?
Only when strange musicians softly play
The ears are glad, and she an hour as they;—
To them the noise is heaven, and to her
A shadowy sweetness and a dying stir.

Ay and sometimes, to such as seek her well,
She in a momentary look can tell
Somewhat of lonely longings, and confess
A fragment of her passion's tenderness.
Ah, best to rest ere love with worship dies,
Pause at the first encounter of the eyes,
Pass on and dream while yet both souls are free,
'That soul I could have loved, if love could be.'"

Thus I lamented, and upon me fell
A sense of solitude more sad than hell,
As one forgot, forsaken, and exiled
Of God and man, from woman and from child:—
Hush, hush, my soul, nor let thy speech draw near
That last and incommunicable fear;
All else shall poets sing, but this alone
The man who tells it never can have known.

Thank God! this dizzying and extreme despair
Not one short hour the human heart can bear,
For with that woe the o'erburdened spirit soon
Faints in the dark and falls into a swoon,
The body sickens with the slackening breath,
And the man dies, for this indeed is death.

Lo for each separate soul the Eternal King
Hath separate ways for peace and comforting;

Then pardon if with such intent I tell
The bliss which in my low estate befell:—
For June midnight became the May mid-
morn,
In that enchanting home where I was born,
When first the child-heart woke, the child-
eyes knew
The bud blush-roses and the sparkling dew.
There gleamed the lake where lone St.
Herbert saw
The solemn mornings and the soundless
awe,—
There were the ferns that shake, the becks
that foam,
The Derwent river and the Cumbrian
home,—
And there, as once, upon my infant head
His blameless hands the Priest of Nature
spread,
Spake fitting words, and gave in great old
age
The patriarch's blessing and the bard's
presage.
Ah, with what sweet rebuke that vision came!
With how pure hope I called on Words-
worth's name!
O if on earth's green bosom one could lay,
Like him, tired limbs and trustful head, and
say,
"To thee, to thee, my mother, I resign
All of my life that still is only mine;

I want no separate pleasures, make me one
With springing seasons in the rain and sun:
To thy great heart our hearts for ever yearn ;
Thy children wander, let thy child return ! "

To such a man, by self-surrender wise,
With the one soul of all things in his eyes,
To such a life, embosomed and enfurled
In the old unspoken beauty of the world,
Might Nature with a sweet relenting show
More of herself than men by knowledge know ;
Till, if he caught the soundless sighing breath
Wherewith the whole creation travaileth,—
If once to human ears revealed could be
The immemorial secret of the sea,—
By such great lessons might that man attain
A life which is not pleasure, is not pain,—
A life collected, elemental, strong,
A sacrosanct tranquillity of song,
Fed by the word unheard, the sight unseen,
The breath that passes man and God between,
When ere the end comes is the end begun,
And the One Soul has flown into the One.

Hereat my soul, which cannot spread for long
Her tethered pinions in the heaven of song,
To her poor home descending with a sigh
Looked through her windows on the earth and sky:

Where she had left the limbs she found
them still,
In the same blackness, on the silent hill,
Yet for a while was her return sublime
With dying echoes of the cosmic chime,
And through the parted gloom there fell with
her
Some ray from Sire or Son or Comforter;
For in mine ears the silence made a tune,
And to mine eyes the dark was plenilune,
And mountain airs and streams and stones
and sod
Bare witness to the Fatherhood of God.

ZURICH, *June* 30, 1870.

THE IMPLICIT PROMISE OF IMMORTALITY

Or questi che dall' infima lacuna
Dell' universo insin qui ha vedute
Le vite spiritali ad una ad una,
Supplica a te per grazia di virtute
Tanto che possa con gli occhi levarsi
Più alto verso l' ultima salute.
DANTE, *Par.* xxxiii. 22-28.

FRIEND, and it little matters if with thee
In shadowed vales and night's solemnity
Heart has met heart, and soul with soul has known
A deathless kinship and one hope alone;—
Or if thy dear voice by mine ears unheard
Has never spoken me one wingèd word,
Nor mine eyes seen thee, nor my spirit guessed
The answering spirit hidden in thy breast;—
Known or unknown, seen once and loved for long,
Or only reached by this faint breath of song,
In thine imagined ears I pour again
A faltering message from the man in men,—
Thoughts that are born with summer, but abide
Past summer into sad Allhallowtide.

The world without, men say, the needs within,
Which clash and make what we call sorrow and sin,
Tend to adjustment evermore, until
The individual and the cosmic will
Shall coincide, and man content and free
Assume at last his endless empery,
Seeking his Eden and his Heaven no more
By fabled streams behind him or before,
But feeling Pison with Euphrates roll
Round the great garden of his kingly soul.

I answer that, so far, the type that springs
Seems like a race of strangers, not of kings
Less fit for earth, not more so ; rather say
Grown like the dog who when musicians play
Feels each false note and howls, while yet the true
With doubtful pleasure tremulous thrill him through,
Since man's strange thoughts confuse him, and destroy
With half-guessed raptures his ancestral joy.

Meantime dim wonder on the untravelled way
Holds our best hearts, and palsies all our day;
One looks on God, and then with eyes struck blind
Brings a confusing rumour to mankind;

And others listen, and no work can do
Till they have got that God defined anew;
And in the darkness some have fallen, as fell
To baser gods the folk of Israel,
When with Jehovah's thunders heard too nigh
They wantoned in the shade of Sinai.

Take any of the sons our Age has nursed,
Fed with her food and taught her best and worst;
Suppose no great disaster; look not nigh
On hidden hours of his extremity;
But watch him like the flickering magnet stirred
By each imponderable look and word,
And think how firm a courage every day
He needs to bear him on life's common way,
Since even at the best his spirit moves
Thro' such a tourney of conflicting loves,—
Unwisely sought, untruly called untrue,
Beloved, and hated, and beloved anew;
Till in the changing whirl of praise and blame
He feels himself the same and not the same,
And often, overworn and overwon,
Knows all a dream and wishes all were done.

I know it, such an one these eyes have seen
About the world with his unworldly mien,
And often idly hopeless, often bent
On some tumultuous deed and vehement,
Because his spirit he can nowise fit

To the world's ways and settled rule of it,
But thro' contented thousands travels on
Like a sad heir in disinherison,
And rarely by great thought or brave emprise
Comes out about his life's perplexities,
Looks thro' the rifted cloudland, and sees clear
Fate at his feet and the high God anear.

Ah let him tarry on those heights, nor dream
Of other founts than that Aonian stream!
Since short and fierce, then hated, drowned, and dim
Shall most men's chosen pleasures come to him,—
Not made for such things, nor for long content
With the poor toys of this imprisonment.
Ay, should he sit one afternoon beguiled
By some such joy as makes the wise a child,
Yet if at twilight to his ears shall come
A distant music thro' the city's hum,
So slight a thing as this will wake again
The incommunicable homeless pain,
Until his soul so yearns to reunite
With her Prime Source, her Master and Delight,
As if some loadstone drew her, and brain and limb
Ached with her struggle to get through to Him.

And is this then delusion ? can it be
That like the rest high heaven is phantasy ?
Can God's implicit promise be but one
Among so many visions all undone ?

Nay, if on earth two souls thro' sundering fate
Can save their sisterhood inviolate,
If dimness and deferment, time and pain,
Have no more lasting power upon those twain
Than stormy thunderclouds which, spent and done,
Leave grateful earth still gazing on the sun,—
If their divine hope gladly can forgo
Such nearness as this wretched flesh can know,
While, spite of all that even themselves may do,
Each by her own truth feels the other true :—
Faithful no less is God, who having won
Our spirits to His endless unison
Betrays not our dependence, nor can break
The oath unuttered which His silence spake.

Oh dreadful thought, if all our sires and we
Are but foundations of a race to be,—
Stones which one thrusts in earth, and builds thereon
A white delight, a Parian Parthenon,
And thither long thereafter, youth and maid

Seek with glad brows the alabaster shade,
And in processions' pomp together bent
Still interchange their sweet words innocent,—
Not caring that those mighty columns rest
Each on the ruin of a human breast,—
That to the shrine the victor's chariot rolls
Across the anguish of ten thousand souls!

"Well was it that our fathers suffered thus,"
I hear them say, "that all might end in us;
Well was it here and there a bard should feel
Pains premature and hurt that none could heal;
These were their preludes, thus the race began;
So hard a matter was the birth of Man."

And yet these too shall pass and fade and flee,
And in their death shall be as vile as we,
Nor much shall profit with their perfect powers
To have lived a so much sweeter life than ours,
When at the last, with all their bliss gone by,
Like us those glorious creatures come to die,
With far worse woe, far more rebellious strife
Those mighty spirits drink the dregs of life.

Nay, by no cumulative changeful years,
For all our bitter harvesting of tears,

Shalt thou tame man, nor in his breast
destroy
The longing for his home which deadens
joy;
He cannot mate here, and his cage controls
Safe bodies, separate and sterile souls;
And wouldst thou bless the captives, thou
must show
The wild green woods which they again shall
know.

Therefore have we, while night serenely
fell,
Imparadised in sunset's œnomel,
Beheld the empyrean, star on star
Perfecting solemn change and secular,
Each with slow roll and pauseless period
Writing the solitary thoughts of God.
Not blindly in such moments, not in vain,
The open secret flashes on the brain,
As if one almost guessed it, almost knew
Whence we have sailed and voyage where-
unto;
Not vainly, for albeit that hour goes by,
And the strange letters perish from the sky,
Yet learn we that a life to us is given
One with the cosmic spectacles of heaven,—
Feel the still soul, for all her questionings,
Parcel and part of sempiternal things;
For us, for all, one overarching dome,
One law the order, and one God the home.

Ah, but who knows in what thin form
and strange,
Through what appalled perplexities of change,
Wakes the sad soul, which having once for-
gone
This earth familiar and her friends thereon
In interstellar void becomes a chill
Outlying fragment of the Master Will;
So severed, so forgetting, shall not she
Lament, immortal, immortality?

If thou wouldst have high God thy soul
assure
That she herself shall as herself endure,
Shall in no alien semblance, thine and wise,
Fulfil her and be young in Paradise,
One way I know; forget, forswear, disdain
Thine own best hopes, thine utmost loss and
gain,
Till when at last thou scarce rememberest now
If on the earth be such a man as thou,
Nor hast one thought of self-surrender,—no,
For self is none remaining to forgo,—
If ever, then shall strong persuasion fall
That in thy giving thou hast gained thine all,
Given the poor present, gained the boundless
scope,
And kept thee virgin for the further hope.

This is the hero's temper, and to some
With battle-trumpetings that hour has come,

With guns that thunder and with winds that
fall,
With closing fleets and voices augural;—
For some, methinks, in no less noble wise
Divine prevision kindles in the eyes,
When all base thoughts like frighted harpies
flown
In her own beauty leave the soul alone;
When Love,—not rosy-flushed as he began,
But Love, still Love, the prisoned God in
man,—
Shows his face glorious, shakes his banner
free,
Cries like a captain for Eternity:—
O halcyon air across the storms of youth,
O trust him, he is true, he is one with Truth!
Nay, is he Christ? I know not; no man
knows
The right name of the heavenly Anterôs,—
But here is God, whatever God may be,
And whomsoe'er we worship, this is He.

Ah, friend, I have not said it: who shall tell
In wavering words the hope unspeakable?
Which he who once has known will labour
long
To set forth sweetly in persuasive song,
Yea, many hours with hopeless art will try
To save the fair thing that it shall not die,
Then after all despairs, and leaves to-day
A hidden meaning in a nameless lay.

ON ART AS AN AIM IN LIFE

Ein unbegreiflich holdes Sehnen
Trieb mich, durch Wald und Wiesen hinzugehn,
Und unter tausend heissen Thränen
Fühlt' ich mir eine Welt entstehn.

GOETHE.

How was it that he knew it ? ay, or where
Beholding an immortal in the air
Fixed he for aye, with swift touch unafraid,
That vision of the vision of a maid,
Whose hands are dropped, whose glowing eyes aspire
To some half-seen concent and heavenly quire,
While at her sacred feet forgotten lie
The useless tools of mortal minstrelsy ?

True type of Art, which never long content
Can feed her flame with song or instrument,
Still from the bright supernal dream must draw
Light on her brows, and language, and a law,
If she her glorious message would renew,
Live her great life, and make the picture true,
Where stand that musical sweet maid anear
Saint and evangelist and sage and seer ;

They watch Cecilia's eyes, but not for them
Opens on earth the heaven's Jerusalem.

Thou whom with thrills, like the first thrills that stir
In a girl's heart when Love is waking her,
With set of soul like the blind strength that sways
Beneath the moon's clear face the watery ways,
God from a child has chosen and set apart
For this one priesthood and last shrine of Art,
See thou maintain thy calling; take no heed
Of such as tell thee there is little need
Of beauty on the earth till peace be here,
That, till some true sun make the world less drear,
All vainly flush in thy thin air withdrawn
Auroral streamers of the untimely dawn.

They err; no other way as yet is known
With God's dim purpose to unite our own,
Except for each to follow as he can
The central impulse that has made him man,
Live his true self, and find his work and rest
In toil or pleasure where that self is best.

And hast thou chosen then? canst thou endure
The purging change of frost and calenture;
Accept the sick recoil, the weary pain

Of senses heightened, keener nerves and brain—
Suffer and love, love much and suffer long—
And live thro' all, and at the last be strong ?
For hard the Aonian heights, and far and few
Their starry memories who have won thereto;
Who to the end loved love, who still the same
Followed lifelong the lonely road to fame;
And fame they found, with so great heart had they
Traversed that open unfrequented way.
Have courage; follow; yet no heart have I,
O soul elect, thy pains to prophesy,
Loth to myself to speak them, loth to know
That creatures born for love are born for woe.

Ay, if all else be spared thee, none the less
Enough, enough to bear is loneliness—
The hope that still, till hope with days be done,
Must seek the perfect friend and find not one;
Not one of all whom thine eyes' mastering flame
At will enkindles and at will can tame;—
Not one, O woman, of men strong and free
Whom thy mere presence makes the slaves of thee,
Yet thy king comes not, and the golden door
To thy heart's heart is shut for evermore.

Then oft thy very pulse shall sink away
Sick with the length of disenchanted day,
And after midnight, when the moon looks cold
On lawn and skies grey-azure and grey-gold,
So soft a passion to thy heart shall creep,
To change the dreamful for the dreamless sleep,
That turning round on that unrestful gloom
And peopled silence of thy lonely room,
Thou shalt need all the strength that God can give
Simply to live, my friend, simply to live.

Thou in that hour rejoice, since only thus
Can thy proud heart grow wholly piteous,
Thus only to the world thy speech can flow
Charged with the sad authority of woe
Since no man nurtured in the shade can sing
To a true note our psalm of conquering;
Warriors must chant it, whom our own eyes see
Red from the battle and more bruised than we,
Men who have borne the worst, have known the whole,
Have felt the last abeyance of the soul,
Low in the dust with rigid face have lain,
Self-scorned, self-spoiled, self-hated, and self-slain.

Since all alike we bear, but all apart,
One human anguish hidden at the heart,

All with eyes faint, with hopes that half endure,
Seek in the vault our vanished Cynosure,
And strain our helpless oarage, and essay
Thro' flood and fire the innavigable way.

In such dark places truth lies hid, and still
Man's wisdom comes on man against his will,
And his stern sibyl, ere her tale she tell,
Shows the shapes coiling at the gate of hell.

Such be thy sorrows, yet methinks for them
Thine Art herself has help and requiem;
Ah, when some painter, God-encompassed,
Finds the pure passion, lives among the dead,—
When angel eyes regarding thee enthral
Thy spirit in the light angelical,
And heaven and hope and all thy memories seem
Mixed with their being in a lovely dream,—
What place for anger? what to thee is this
That foe and friend judge justly or amiss?
No man can help or harm thee; far away
Their voices sound and like thin air are they;
Thou with the primal Beauty art alone,
And tears forgotten and a world thine own.

How oft Fate's sharpest blows shall leave thee strong
With some re-risen ecstasy of song!

How oft the unimagined message bound
In great sonatas and a stormy sound
Shall seize thee and constrain thee, and make thee sure
That *this* is true, and *this*, and these endure,—
Being at the root of all things, lying low,
Being Life, and Love, and God has willed it so.

Ah, strange the bond that in one great life binds
All master-moments of all master-minds!
Strange the one clan that years nor wars destroy,
The undispersed co-heritage of joy!
Strange that howe'er the sundering ages roll,
From age to age shall soul encounter soul,
Across the dying times, the world's dim roar,
Speak each with each, and live for evermore!
So have I seen in some deep wood divine
The dark and silvery stems of birch and pine;
Apart they sprang, rough earth between them lay
Tangled with brambles and with briars, but they
Met at their summits, and a rushing breeze
Inlocked the topmost murmur of the trees.

If only thou to thine own self couldst be
As kind as God and Nature are to thee!
They lade thy bark for nought, they pile thereon

With vain largess the golden cargason,
If with thy royal joys not yet content
Thou needs must lavish all, till all be spent,
If thou wilt change for hurrying loves that die
Thy strength, thine art, thine immortality,—
If thou wilt see thy sweet soul burned like myrrh
Before such gods as have no gift for her.[1]

For even when once was God well pleased to shed
His thousand glories on a single head,
Amid our baffled lives and struggles dim,
To make one fair and all fair things for him—
Ah, what avail the eyes, the heart of flame,
The angel nature in the angel name?
Amid his fadeless art he fades away
Fair as his pictures but more frail than they,
Leaves deathless shrines, wherein sweet spirits dwell,
But not, not yet, the soul of Raphael.

Yet there are lives that mid the trampling throng
With their prime beauty bloom at evensong,
Souls that with no confusing flutter rise,

[1] Tal che tanto ardo che nè mar nè fiume
Spegner potrian quel foco, ma piace
Poich' il mio ardor tanto di ben mi face
Ch' ardendo ognor piu d' arder mi consuma.—RAPHAEL.

Spread their wings once, and sail in Paradise,
Hearts for whom God has judged it best to know
Only by hearsay sin and waste and woe,
Bright to come hither and to travel hence
Bright as they came, and wise in innocence;
So simply fair, so brave and unbeguiled,
Set Christ among the twelve the wiser child.
Wilt thou forget? forget not; keep apart
A certain faithful silence in the heart;
Speak to no friend thereof, and rare and slow
Let thine own thoughts to that their treasure go:—
Ay, an unconscious look, a broken tone,
A soft breath near thee timing with thine own,
These are thy treasures; dearer these to thee
Than the whole store of lifelong memory;
Dearer than joys and passions, for indeed
Those are blown blossoms, this the single seed,
And life is winter for it, death is spring,
And God the sun and heaven the harvesting.

Oh would that life and strength and spirit and song
Could come so flowing, could endure so long,
As might suffice a little at least to praise
The charm and glory of these latter days—
To let the captive thoughts a moment fly

That rise unsummoned and unspoken die!
Oh were I there when oft in some still place
Imagined music flushes in the face,
And silent and sonorous, to and fro,
Thro' the raised head the marching phrases flow!
Were mine the fame, when all the air is fire
With light and life and beauty and desire,
When one, when one thro' all the electric throng
Hurtles the jewel arrows of her song,—
Then crashed from tier on tier, from hand and tongue,
The ringing glory makes an old world young!
O marvel, that deep-hid in earth should lie
So many a seed and source of harmony,
Which age on age have slept, and in an hour
Surge in a sea and flame into a flower;
Which are a mystery; which having wist
From his great heart the master-melodist
Strikes till the strong chords tremble and abound
With tyrannous reversion of sweet sound,
Till bar on bar, till quivering string on string,
Break from their maker, are alive and sing,
With force for ever on all hearts to roll
Wave after wave the ocean of his soul!

Yet ah how feeble, ah how faint and low
The organ peals, the silver trumpets blow!
Alas, the glorious thoughts which never yet

Have found a sound in fugue or canzonet,
Nor can the pain of their delight declare
With magic of sweet figures and blue air!
Oh could one once by grace of God disclose
The heart's last sigh, the secret of the rose!
But once set free the soul, and breathe away
Life in the light of one transcendent day!

Not thus has God ordained it; nay, but He
To silent hearts is present silently;
He waits till in thee perish pride and shame,
Sense of thyself, and all thy thoughts of fame;
Then when thy task is over, His begun,
He leads thy soul where all the Arts are one—
Leads to His shrine, and has of old unfurled
To chosen eyes the wonder of the world.
Then let no life but His, no love be near,
Only in thought be even the dearest dear!
No sound or touch must kindle or control
This mounting joy, this sabbath of the soul:
He gives a lonely rapture; ay, as now
From this dark height and Sanminiato's brow,
Watching the beautiful ensanguined day
From Bellosguardo fade and Fiesole,—
Oh look how bridge and river, and dome and spire
Become one glory in the rose-red fire,
Till starlit Arno thro' the vale shall shine

And sweep to sea the roar of Apennine!
This is the spirit's worship: even so
I ween that in a dream and long ago,
Wearing together in her happy hour
The fruit of life and life's enchanting flower,
Herself, alone, essential and divine,
Came his own Florence to the Florentine,
And lily-sceptred in his vision stood
A city like the soul of womanhood.

FLORENCE, *Jan.* 1871.

TWO SISTERS

First Sister

When dusk descends and dews begin
  She sees the forest ghostly fair,
And, half in heaven, is drinking in
  The moonlit melancholy air:
The sons of God have charge and care
  Her maiden grace from foes to keep,
And Jesus sends her unaware
  A maiden sanctity of sleep.

Second Sister

In dreams, in dreams, with sweet surprise
  I see the lord of all these things;
From night and nought with eager eyes
  He comes, and in his coming sings:
His gentle port is like a king's,
  His open face is free and fair,
And lightly from his brow he flings
  The young abundance of his hair.

First Sister

Oh who hath watched her kneel to pray
In hours forgetful of the sun?
Or seen beneath the dome of day
The hovering seraph seek the nun?
Her weary years at last have won
A life from life's confusion free:
What else is this but heaven begun
Pure peace and simple chastity?

Second Sister

Oh never yet to mortal maid
Such sad divine division came
From all that stirs or makes afraid
The gentle thoughts without a name;
Through all that lives a sacred shame,
A pulse of pleasant trouble, flows,
And tips the daisy's tinge of flame,
And blushes redder in the rose.

First Sister

From lifted head the golden hair
Is soft and blowing in the breeze,
And softly on her brows of prayer
The summer-shadow flits and flees:
Then parts a pathway thro' the trees,
A vista sunlit and serene,
And there and then it is she sees
What none but such as she have seen.

Second Sister

Oh if with him by lea and lawn
I pressed but once the silvery sod,
And scattered sparkles of the dawn
From aster and from golden-rod,
I would not tread where others trod,
Nor dream as other maidens do,
Nor more should need to ask of God,
When God had brought me thereunto.

SIMMENTHAL

Far off the old snows evernew
With silver edges cleft the blue
Aloft, alone, divine;
The sunny meadows silent slept,
Silence the sombre armies kept,
The vanguard of the pine.

In that thin air the birds are still,
No ringdove murmurs on the hill
Nor mating cushat calls;
But gay cicalas singing sprang,
And waters from the forest sang
The song of waterfalls.

O Fate! a few enchanted hours
Beneath the firs, among the flowers,
High on the lawn we lay,
Then turned again, contented well,
While bright about us flamed and fell
The rapture of the day.

And softly with a guileless awe
Beyond the purple lake she saw
The embattled summits glow;

She saw the glories melt in one,
The round moon rise, while yet the sun
Was rosy on the snow.

Then like a newly singing bird
The child's soul in her bosom stirred;
I know not what she sung:—
Because the soft wind caught her hair,
Because the golden moon was fair,
Because her heart was young.

I would her sweet soul ever may
Look thus from those glad eyes and grey,
Unfearing, undefiled:
I love her; when her face I see,
Her simple presence wakes in me
The imperishable child.

ON AN INVALID

Lo, as the poet finds at will
Than tenderest words a tenderer still
For one beside him prest;
So from the Lord a mercy flows,
A sweeter balm from Sharon's rose,
For her that loves him best.

And ere the early throstles stir
With some sweet word from God for her
The morn returns anew;
For her His face in the east is fair,
For her His breath is in the air,
His rainbow in the dew.

At such an hour the promise falls
With glory on the narrow walls,
With strength on failing breath;
There comes a courage in her eyes,
It gathers for the great emprize,
The deeds of after death.

Albeit thro' this preluding woe
Subdued and softly she must go
With half her music dumb,

What heavenly hopes to her belong,
And what a rapture, what a song,
Shall greet His kingdom come!

So climbers by some Alpine mere
Walk very softly thro' the clear
Unlitten dawn of day:
The morning star before them shows
Beyond the rocks, beyond the snows,
Their never-travelled way.

Or so, ere singers have begun,
The master-organist has won
The folk at eve to prayer:
So soft the tune, it only seems
The music of an angel's dreams
Made audible in air.

But when the mounting treble shakes,
When with a noise the anthem wakes
A song forgetting sin,—
Thro' all her pipes the organ peals,
With all her voice at last reveals
The storm of praise within.

The trump! the trump! how pure and high!
How clear the fairy flutes reply!
How bold the clarions blow!
Nor God Himself has scorned the strain,
But hears it and shall hear again,
And heard it long ago.

WOULD GOD IT WERE EVENING

Imprisoned in the soul and in the sin,
Imprisoned in the body and the pain,
The accustomed hateful memories within,
Without the accustomed limbs that ache again :—
Alas! a melancholy peace to win
With all their notes the nightingales complain,
And I such music as is mine begin,
Awake for nothing, and alive in vain.
I find few words and falter; then in scorn
My lips are silent; uncreate, unborn,
Evanishes the visionary lay;
While from clear air upon my soul forlorn
Falls thro' the heedless splendour of the morn
A sadness as the sadness of to-day.

WOULD GOD IT WERE MORNING

My God, how many times ere I be dead
Must I the bitterness of dying know?
How often like a corpse upon my bed
Compose me and surrender me and so
Thro' hateful hours and ill-remembered
Between the twilight and the twilight go
By visions bodiless obscurely led
Thro' many a wild enormity of woe?
And yet I know not but that this is worst
When with that light, the feeble and the first,
I start and gaze into the world again,
And gazing find it as of old accurst
And grey and blinded with the stormy burst
And blank appalling solitude of rain.

HIGH TIDE AT MIDNIGHT

No breath is on the glimmering ocean-floor,
No blast beneath the windless Pleiades,
But thro' dead night a melancholy roar,
A voice of moving and of marching seas,—
The boom of thundering waters on the shore
Sworn with slow force by desolate degrees
Once to go on, and whelm for evermore
Earth and her folk and all their phantasies.
Then half-asleep in the great sound I seem
Lost in the starlight, dying in a dream
Where overmastering Powers abolish me,—
Drown, and thro' dim euthanasy redeem
My merged life in the living ocean-stream
And soul environing of shadowy sea.

ON A GRAVE AT GRINDELWALD

Here let us leave him; for his shroud the
snow,
For funeral-lamps he has the planets seven,
For a great sign the icy stair shall go
Between the heights to heaven.

One moment stood he as the angels stand,
High in the stainless eminence of air;
The next, he was not, to his fatherland
Translated unaware.

AFTER AN INTERVIEW

So while the careless crowd have gazed and
gone
Sits one man stedfast in a chosen place,
And of all faces which they gaze upon
Desires one only face:

For early morning finds the lover there,
Also at eventide his eyes are dim,
Till at the last he slowly is aware
His soul has flown from him.

So also he whom vanished organ-lays
Have stung to jubilance and thrilled to
tears
Sits with sonorous memories of praise
Tranced in his echoing ears:

Thro' all his blood the billowy clangours roll,
Thro' all his body leaps the living strain,
And sweetly, stilly, in his hidden soul
The soft notes sink again.

Then while the trooping singers outward range
He waits enthralled in that superb surprise:
Like airy ghosts they pass him by, nor change
His wide and wistful eyes.

So stays he in high heaven a little space,
Then treads the portal which the others trod,
And issues into silence, face to face
With darkness and with God.

LOVE AND FAITH

Lo if a man, magnanimous and tender,
Lo if a woman, desperate and true,
Make the irrevocable sweet surrender,
Show to each other what the Lord can do,—

Each, as I know, a helping and a healing,
Each to the other strangely a surprise,
Heart to the heart its mystery revealing,
Soul to the soul in melancholy eyes,—

Where wilt thou find a riving or a rending
Able to sever them in twain again?
God hath begun, and God's shall be the ending,
Safe in His bosom and aloof from men.

Her thou mayest separate but shalt not sunder,
Tho' thou distress her for a little while;—
Rapt in a worship, ravished in a wonder,
Stayed on the stedfast promise of a smile,

Scarcely she knoweth if his arms have found her—
Waves of his breath make tremulous the air—
Or if the thrill within her and around her
Be but the distant echo of his prayer.

Nay, and much more; for love in his demanding
Will not be bound in limits of our breath,
Calls her to follow where she sees him standing
Fairer and stronger for the plunge of death;—

Waketh a vision and a voice within her
Sweeter than dreams and clearer than complaint,
"Is it a man thou lovest, and a sinner?
No! but a soul, o woman, and a saint!"

Well,—if to her such prophecy be given,
Strong to illuminate when sight is dim,
Then tho' my Lord be holy in the heaven
How should the heavens sunder me from Him?

She and her love,—how dimly has she seen him
Dark in a dream and windy in a wraith!

I and my Lord,—between me and between Him
Rises the lucent ladder of my faith.

Ay, and thereon, descending and ascending,
Suns at my side and starry in the air,
Angels, His ministers, their tasks are blending,
Bear me the blessing, render Him the prayer.

A PRAYER

O FOR one minute hark what we are saying !
This is not pleasure that we ask of Thee !
Nay, let all life be weary with our praying,
Streaming of tears and bending of the knee :—

Only we ask thro' shadows of the valley
Stay of thy staff and guiding of thy rod,
Only, when rulers of the darkness rally,
Be thou beside us, very near, O God !

A LAST APPEAL

O SOMEWHERE, somewhere, God unknown,
Exist and be!
I am dying; I am all alone;
I must have Thee!

God! God! my sense, my soul, my all,
Dies in the cry:—
Saw'st thou the faint star flame and fall?
Ah! it was I.

TENERIFFE

I

Atlantid islands, phantom-fair,
Throned on the solitary seas,
Immersed in amethystine air,
Haunt of Hesperides!
Farewell! I leave Madeira thus
Drowned in a sunset glorious,
The Holy Harbour fading far
Beneath a blaze of cinnabar.

II

What sights had burning eve to show
From Tacoronte's orange-bowers,
From palmy headlands of Ycod,
From Orotava's flowers!
When Palma or Canary lay
Cloud-cinctured in the crimson day,—
Sea, and sea-wrack, and rising higher
Those purple peaks 'twixt cloud and fire.

III

But oh the cone aloft and clear
Where Atlas in the heavens withdrawn
To hemisphere and hemisphere
Disparts the dark and dawn!
O vaporous waves that roll and press!
Fire-opalescent wilderness!
O pathway by the sunbeams ploughed
Betwixt those pouring walls of cloud!

IV

We watched adown that glade of fire
Celestial Iris floating free;
We saw the cloudlets keep in choir
Their dances on the sea;
The scarlet, huge, and quivering sun
Feared his due hour was overrun,—
On us the last he blazed, and hurled
His glory on Columbus' world.

V

Then ere our eyes the change could tell,
Or feet bewildered turn again,
From Teneriffe the darkness fell
Head-foremost on the main:—
A hundred leagues was seaward thrown
The gloom of Teyde's towering cone,—
Full half the height of heaven's blue
That monstrous shadow overflew.

VI

Then all is twilight; pile on pile
The scattered flocks of cloudland close,
An alabaster wall, erewhile
Much redder than the rose!—
Falls like a sleep on souls forspent
Majestic Night's abandonment;
Wakes like a waking life afar
Hung o'er the sea one eastern star.

VII

O Nature's glory, Nature's youth,
Perfected sempiternal whole!
And is the World's in very truth
An impercipient Soul?
Or doth that Spirit, past our ken,
Live a profounder life than men,
Awaits our passing days, and thus
In secret places calls to us?

VIII

O fear not thou, whate'er befall
Thy transient individual breath;—
Behold, thou knowest not at all
What kind of thing is Death:
And here indeed might Death be fair,
If Death be dying into air,—
If souls evanished mix with thee,
Illumined Heaven, eternal Sea.

1874.

A LETTER FROM NEWPORT

Φαίη κ' ἀθανάτους καὶ ἀγήρως ἔμμεναι αἰεί,
ὃς τότ' ἐπαντιάσει', ὅτ' Ἰάονες ἀθρόοι εἶεν.

The crimson leafage fires the lawn,
The piled hydrangeas blazing glow;
How blue the vault of breezy dawn
Illumes the Atlantic's crested snow!
'Twixt sea and sands how fair to ride
Through whispering airs a starlit way,
And watch those flashing towers divide
Heaven's darkness from the darkling bay!

Ah, friend, how vain their pedant's part,
Their hurrying toils how idly spent,
How have they wronged the gentler heart
Which thrills the awakening continent,
Who have not learnt on this bright shore
What sweetness issues from the strong,
Where flowerless forest, cataract-roar,
Have found a blossom and a song!

Ah, what imperial force of fate
Links our one race in high emprize!
Nor aught henceforth can separate
Those glories mingling as they rise;

For one in heart, as one in speech,
At last have Child and Mother grown,—
Fair Figures! honouring each in each
A beauty kindred with her own.

Through English eyes more calmly soft
Looks from grey deeps the appealing charm;
Reddens on English cheeks more oft
The rose of innocent alarm:—
Our old-world heart more gravely feels,
Has learnt more force, more self-control;
For us through sterner music peals
The full accord of soul and soul.

But ah, the life, the smile untaught,
The floating presence feathery-fair!
The eyes and aspect that have caught
The brilliance of Columbian air!
No oriole through the forest flits
More sheeny-plumed, more gay and free;
On no nymph's marble forehead sits
Proudlier a glad virginity.

So once the Egyptian, gravely bold,
Wandered the Ionian folk among,
Heard from their high Letôon rolled
That song the Delian maidens sung;
Danced in his eyes the dazzling gold,
For with his voice the tears had sprung,—
"They die not, these! they wax not old,
They are ever-living, ever-young!"

Spread then, great land! thine arms afar,
  Thy golden harvest westward roll;
Banner with banner, star with star,
  Ally the tropics and the pole;—
There glows no gem than these more bright
  From ice to fire, from sea to sea;
Blossoms no fairer flower to light
  Through all thine endless empery.

And thou come hither, friend! thou too
  Their kingdom enter as a boy;
Fed with their glorious youth renew
  Thy dimmed prerogative of joy:—
Come with small question, little thought,
  Through thy worn veins what pulse shall flow,
With what regrets, what fancies fraught,
  Shall silver-footed summer go:—

If round one fairest face shall meet
  Those many dreams of many fair,
And wandering homage seek the feet
  Of one sweet queen, and linger there;
Or if strange winds betwixt be driven,
  Unvoyageable oceans foam,
Nor this new earth, this airy heaven,
  For thy sad heart can find a home.

NEWPORT, R.I., *Sept.* 1879.

EPITHALAMIUM

To him our wisest, him our best,
What praise or guerdon could we bring ?
What crown of ours could show confest
Our crownless unanointed king ?—
Our hearts we gave him ; strong and true
His heart replied, to help or heal,
Yet dumbly in his look we knew
A nameless infinite appeal.

Wealth, honours, fame,—hope's common range,—
We named and smiled and passed them by :—
No shine or shade without could change
The vision of that inward eye.
That temple by great thoughts upbuilt
Was void and stedfast, cold and fair ;
No wine was on its altar spilt,
A god unknown was worshipped there.

Yet rarely thro' its heights he heard
Egerian echoes floating free ;
An unbeholden presence stirred
His brow's austere serenity.

Then from the altar flashed the flame,
Flowed on the hearth the fervid wine,—
From heaven and air the answer came
And stood a Spirit in the shrine.

One voice alone, one only hand,
The immaterial gift could give,
Could bid the world-wide soul expand,
A heart within the great heart live:—
No word of praise she sought to say,
For him no worldly crown to win,
But with a look, and in a day,
She gave a kingdom from within.

O fate ordained, august, secure,
And Love the child that never dies,
When to the stainless earth is pure
And life all wisdom to the wise!
Aye shall the inner hope endure
That looks from their illumined eyes;
Thro' this the very world stands sure,
And souls like these are Paradise.

IN HENRY VII.'S CHAPEL, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

O HOLY heart of England! inmost shrine
Of Mary's grace divine;
Proud aisles, where all things noble, all things high,
Her sweet soul magnify;
Vaults where the bones of mighty kings are laid,
Blest by a Mother-Maid!
One heart, great shrine, thou knewest then, be sure,
As thine own Mistress pure;
Eyes that like hers by supplication bless,
And reign by lowliness.
Oh solemn hour, and on Love's altar sent
Sun-fire for sacrament,
When in the age-old answers she and I
Made each to each reply;—
Ay, for a moment rose and were alone
With Him who was our own,
While wide on earth heaven's height made luminous
Shone, and the Lord on us.

O Priest, whose voice from that irradiant sun
Proclaimed the twain made one,—
Amid the banners of his Order spake
That oath no age can break!
Voice of a Ruler born to soothe and sway
Man on his wandering way,
Dowered with the courage glad, the wisdom mild,
Which keep the sage a child;
Whose high thoughts immanent have built him fair
A shrine in the upper air
Stainless, and still, and ever oftener trod
By messengers of God!
While to that voice amid those memories heard
Answered her underword,
No wonder if the Eternal Presence then
Seemed mute no more to men,
Nor gulf betwixt, nor any darkness shed
On souls miscalled the dead;
Since we and they, henceforth or long ago,
One life alone can know;—
Since from seas under earth to stars above
There is no joy but love,
Nor in God's house shall any glory be
Save God and such as she.

STANZAS ON MR. WATTS' COLLECTED WORKS

Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive, though a happy place.

I

For many a year the master wrought,
And wisdom deepened slow with years;
Guest-chambers of his inmost thought
Were filled with shapes too stern for tears;—
Yet Joy was there, and murmuring Love,
And Youth that hears with hastened breath,
But, throned in peace all these above,
The unrevealing eyes of Death.

II

Faces there were which won him yet,
Fair daughters of an iron age:
In iron truth pourtrayed he set
Warrior and statesman, bard and sage.

From hidden deeps their past he drew,
The ancestral bent of stock and stem;
More of their hearts than yet they knew
Thro' their own gaze looked out on them.

III

Yet oftenest in the past he walked,
With god or hero long gone by,
Oft, like his pictured Genius, talked
With rainbow forms that span the sky:
Thereto his soul hath listed long,
When silent voices spake in air,—
Hath mirrored many an old-world song
Remote and mystic, sad and fair.

IV

For here the Thracian, vainly wise,
Close on the light his love has led;—
Oh hearken! her melodious cries
Fade in the mutter of the dead:—
"Farewell! from thy embrace I pass,
Drawn to the formless dark alone:
I stretch my hands,—too weak, alas!
And I no more, no more thine own."

V

And here is she whom Art aflame
Smote from the rock a breathing maid;
Calm at the fiery call she came,
Looked on her lover unafraid;

Nor quite was sure if life were best,
And love, till love with life had flown,
Or still with things unborn to rest,
Ideal beauty, changeless stone.

VI

Ah! which the sweeter? she who stands,
A soul to woe that moment born,—
Regretfully her aimless hands
Drooping by Psyche's side forlorn?—
Woke with a shock the god unknown,
And sighing flushed, and flying sighed:
Grey in the dawning stands alone
His desolate and childly bride.

VII

Or she whose soft limbs swiftly sped
The touch of very gods must shun,
And, drowned in many a boscage, fled
The imperious kisses of the sun?
Mix, mix with Daphne, branch and frond,
O laurel-wildness, laurel-shade!
Let Nature's life,—no love beyond,—
Make all the marriage of the maid!

VIII

Or she who, deep in Latmian trees,
Stoops from the height her silver sheen?
Dreams in a dream her shepherd sees
The crescent car, the bending queen.

One kiss she gives; the Fates refuse
A closer bond or longer stay:
The boy sleeps still; her orb renews
Its echoless unmated way.

IX

All these some hope unanswered know,
Some laws that prison, fates that bar;
Baffled their spirit-fountains flow
Towards things diviner and afar.
Such dole at heart their painter felt,
Within, without, such sights to see;
Who in our monstrous London dwelt,
And half remembered Arcady.

X

Ah, sure, those springs of joy and pain
By some remote recall are stirred;
His ancient Guardians smile again,
And touch a colour, speak a word.
Not all asleep thy gods of Greece
Lie tumbled on the Coan shore:—
O painter! thou that knew'st their peace
Must half remember evermore!

XI

So gazed on Phidias' Warrior-maid,
Methinks, Ægina's kingly boy:—
She stood, her Gorgon shield displayed,
Too great for love, too grave for joy.

All day her image held him there;
  This world, this life, with day grew dim;
Some glimmering of the Primal Fair
  Pre-natal memories woke in him.

XII

Then as he walked, like one who dreamed,
  Thro' silent highways silver-hoar,
More wonderful that city seemed,
  And he diviner than before:—
A voice was calling, All is well;
  Clear in the vault Selene shone,
And over Plato's homestead fell
  The shadow of the Parthenon.

PART II

THE PASSING OF YOUTH

ARGUMENT

REFLECTIONS in the Campo Santo at Pisa. The fresco, ascribed to Orcagna, which represents Death at the Festival, suggests the thought that it may be better to die in the flush of youth than to live on into a state of decadence and disgust with life (1—30). He who thus feels the freshness of youth escaping him cannot renew it by the mere contact with the fresh emotion of others (31—58). His habitual melancholy contrasts painfully with the accesses of grief which alternated with keen joy in his earlier years (59—92). If he now occasionally fancies that the old power of feeling remains to him, the illusion does not last long, and he is fain to acquiesce in the exhaustion of his emotional power (93—114). Yet he can scarcely avoid bitterness at the thought of how small his share of emotional delight has been in comparison with all that the future holds in reserve for mankind (115—146). Sometimes he will shape a vision of some ideal love which might have been his, though well knowing that even should some one be born into the world who realises his dream he will have no part in her affections or memories (147—176). Instinctively revolting at the prospect of an approaching extinction he reviews with alternations of hope and despair the possibility of a future existence (177—222). Light on this subject often seems as unattainable now as in the days when Virgil pondered the same problems (223—240). But certain moments seem to carry with them something of inspired insight or of lofty emotion which is at any rate the best basis for practice (241—290). At any rate a man by the sheer effort of the Will may maintain himself in that state of inflexible fearlessness which Virgil admires in Lucretius

(291-296). The languor and melancholy which the aspect of Pisa symbolises may be overcome by this resolute courage, this "living force of the mind" which Lucretius found strong enough to afford to mankind at least the triumph of intellectual insight and philosophic calm (297—312).

ERGO VIVIDA VIS ANIMI PERVICIT—

At Pisa, where the cypress-spires alway
Stand in the languor of the Pisan day,
And airs are motionless, and Arno fills
With brimming hush the hollow of the hills;—
There once alone, from noon till evening's shade,
I paced the echoing cloistral colonnade;
Heard like a dream the grey rain-river fall
On hallowed turf that hath the end of all;
Saw like a ghost the flying form that saith,
"Orcagna knew me; know me; I am Death."

Come then, I said, kind Death, come ever thus,
Swift with a sword on young men amorous!
And thou, youth, thank her that her wiry wings
Snatch thee full-blooded from the feast of kings;
Nor live to outlive thyself, to sigh and know
With waxing restlessness a waning glow;
Even from those hateful ashes of desire
To feel reborn the cold and fruitless fire;

To look, and long a little, and turn aside,
Half over-satiate, half unsatisfied.
Then is no help but that thine eyes must see
Thine inner self stand forth and mock at thee;
Must watch to death in shadowy convoy roll
Thy strength, thy song, thy beauty and thy soul.
No help! and with what anger shalt thou then
Look on the glad lives of up-springing men,
With hearts still high, and still before them fair
All oceans navigable and ambient air;—
How shalt thou love, and envy, and despise
Their hope unreasonable and ardent eyes!

Then if some stainless maid desires no more
Than her fresh soul into thy soul to pour,—
All her pure glory at thy feet will fling,
And give thee youth and ask not anything;—
Take not the boon illusive;—yet I know
That thou wilt take and she will have it so;
Nor once alone; but thou in vain shalt see
On many a cheek the rose of amity,
And for no lasting profit shalt essay
On many a heart thy mastering wistful way,
And speak thus gently, and regard her thus
With loving eyes a little tyrannous,—
As though her passion passion's power could give,
Or heart could melt in heart, or death could live.

Alas, in vain shall that love-light illume
Her cheek transparent and her rosy bloom,
And hopes that flush and happy thoughts that rise
Make living lucid sapphire of her eyes;—
Since all is nothing, and aloof, alone,
With swirl and severance as of Arve and Rhone,
Must heart from heart dissunder; way from way
Part, and to-morrow know not of to-day.
So weighs the Past upon us; such a thing
It is to have grown too wise for comforting;
In a few notes to have sung all thy song,
And in a few years to have lived too long;
Till thy mere voice and soulless shadow now
Recall that this was thine, and this was thou.

O sweet young hours, when one divine love yet
Seemed a new birth thou never couldst forget!
When day on day for the impassioned boy
Came flooding like a silver sea of joy,—
So keen that often o'er his eyes would sweep
The gracious wings of momentary sleep,
To leave their light re-risen, and the brain
Re-kindled for the rapture that was pain!
Then griefs wherein no thought of self had part,
The just and manful angers of the heart,—

When hands would clench, and clear cheek
light and glow,
To be so powerless for another's woe,
And young disdain, and love, and generous
fears
Burst in a proud simplicity of tears!

Ah! even those pains were noble! strange
and pure
As thunders of the breaking calenture,
When storm-refreshed the bounding rivers
run,
And the oak shakes his diamonds in the sun,
Nor cares how brightly on the forest flew
That wildering levin-bolt alive anew.
But these succeeding sorrows I compare
To the chill ruin of October air,
When all earth's life is spent, nor can regain
Strength in the hopeless pauses of the rain,
But scarce the dumb woods shiver, and at
a breath
Falls the wan leaf, and then they whisper,
"Death."

For faiths will die and ancient landmarks
fail,
And promised Eden grow a lovely tale;
And even, by length of years, by sheer decay,
The fiery flower of Love consumes away;
No help to seek, and none to blame, but gone
Like all things else that men set life upon;

Like all that seemed immortal, all that smiled
Mixt with the morn and glory of the child.

Then one at last in cities far away
Hears late in night lamenting hautboys play,
Sees glittering all in swan-soft order sit
That kingdom's fairest and the pride of it;
Till, when one face amid all faces seems
Lit with the witchery of a thousand dreams,
He wonders,—could he change his race and tongue,
And once be joyous, and again be young,—
If, leaning o'er that braided golden head,
New words and sweeter he should find unsaid,
And a last secret and pervading stir
In the soft look and woman-ways of her.
Nay, the fond dream he would so fain prolong
Breaks with a shock of intermitting song,
And truth returns, and in a single sigh
Must that faint love be born at once and die.
" For soon," he saith, " will feverous dreams be spent;
Exhaustion surely shall beget content;
I have lost my battle; doubtless it is best
To have no longing left me but for rest;
In this worn heart, with some last love's decease,
To make a solitude and call it peace."

Yet when a wave of happy laughter low
Stirs in his soul the deep of long ago;—

When his world-wearied ears have overheard
From sweet new lips a sweet accustomed word;—
Then all awakes again, and worse than nought
Seem the best passions which his youth has brought,—
Being such a drop in so profound a sea,
Having given one glimpse of Love's supremacy,
Shown at a glance what great delight shall come
When his eyes see not and his lips are dumb.
How many a glorious joy for ever missed!
How many words unspoken, lips unkissed!
Eyes that shall yet renew with softer play
Thro' many a century the world-old way;—
Hearts from whose glow shall glory of love be shed
Round hearts still living, and o'er his tomb long dead!

Man, while thou mayst, love on! with sound and flowers
Make maddening moments into maddening hours,
Let hours aflame enkindle as they fly
Those loves of yore that in thy darkness die:—
Blest, in that glamour could all life be spent
Before the dawn and disillusionment!
Love on! thy far-off children shall possess

That flying gleam of rainbow happiness :—
Each wish unfilled, impracticable plan,
Goes to the forging of the force of Man ;
Thro' thy blind craving novel powers they gain,
And the slow Race develops in its pain :—
See their new joy begotten of thy woe,
When what thy soul desired their soul shall know ;—
Thy heights unclimbed shall be their wonted way,
Thy hope their memory, and thy dream their day.

Ah, but I had a vision once, nor dare
Recall it often, lest it melt in air !
Whose was the face that thro' the shadows came
And shook the dew from hair that waved like flame ?
What made her look aërial ? ay, or shed
Divineness on that visionary head ?
And whence the words that on her silence hung,
Looked thro' her eyes and died upon her tongue ?—
" Love, who had dreamt it, who had dared to say
Our bliss could come so close, and flee away ? "

Not even the Night shall know her ; it may be

Some falling star would speak it to the sea;
Then the sea's voice would to the shore declare
The hidden sweetness of the First and Fair,
And fisher-maidens into morn prolong
For love the amorous echoes of the song.

Yet if indeed that dear face fugitive,
The dream-begotten, in the day shall live,
And through night's spaces floats the lovely shade
Before the birth and body of the maid,—
How sweet it were to die and still be strong,
To clasp her close with grave and mastering song,—
That she with no interpreter might see
The sincere man and hidden heart of thee,
And down her soft cheek happy tears might roll,
Hearing the dead voice of the sister-soul!
How slight and how impossible a boon
I ask, and love too late, or live too soon!
Only the brief regret, the grace of sighs,
I ask; can Fate deny it? Fate denies.

Crushed, as by following wave the wave before!
To have lived and loved so little, and live no more!
Call this not sleep; through sweet sleep's longest scope

Runs in a golden dream unconscious Hope;
Hope parts the lips and stirs the happy breath,
And sleep is sleep, but endless Death is Death.

Hereat the soul will evermore recur
To that great chance which makes herself for her;
If but the least light glimmer and least hope glow
From that unseen place which no soul can know,—
Whereof so many a sage hath spun in vain
Thoughts fancy-fashioned in a dreaming brain;—
Whereof the priests, for all they say and sing,
Know none the more, nor help in anything;—
Nor more herein can man to man avail
Than to his sorrowing mate the nightingale,—
Nor more can brother unto brother tell
Than blind who leads the blind, though loving well:—
If by some gleam unearthly indeed be lit
That land, and God the sun and moon of it,—
How easy then, how possible to bear
The thoughts that come at night, and are despair,—
Youth wasted, hopes decaying, friends untrue,
Life with no faith to follow or deed to do;

Loves lost, and waning joys, and waked again
The old unquenchable relapse of pain;—
And through these all the ceaseless fruitless fire,
The upward heavenward flickering fierce desire,
The thrilling pang, the tremor of unrest,
The quickening God unborn within the breast,
Which none believe but who have felt, and they
Feel evermore by night and in the day;
For tho' in early youth such longing rose
This single passion gathers as it goes;
And this at dawn wakes with thee, this at even
Hangs in the kindling canopies of heaven;
This, like a hidden water's running tune
Revives the wistful pause of afternoon;—
For strength is this and weakness, hope and fear
By turns, as far sometimes, sometimes anear,
Glows the great Hope, which all too oft will seem
A false inherited delightful dream,
Dreamt of our fathers for blind ease, which we
Knowing that they knew not, seeing they could not see,
Must wake from and have done with, and be brave
Without a heaven to hope or God to save.

O sighs that strongly from my bosom flew!
O heart's oblation sacrificed anew!
O groans and tears of all men and of mine!
O many midnights prostrate and supine,
Unbearable and profitless, and spent
For the empty furtherance of a vain intent,—
From God or Nothingness, from Heaven or Hell,
To wrest the secret that they would not tell,—
To grasp a life beyond life's shrinking span
And learn at last the chief concerns of man!

O last last hope when all the rest are flown!
O one thing worth the knowing, and still unknown!
O sought so passionately and found no more
To-day than when the sad voice sang of yore,
How "God the innumerous souls in great array
To Lethe summons by a wondrous way,
Till these therein their ancient pain forgive,
Forget their life, and will again to live."

Yet in some hours when earth and heaven are fair,
In some sabbatical repose of air,
When all has passed that dizzied or defiled,
And thy clear soul comes to thee as a child,
Then incorruptible, unending, free,

Like the moon's golden road upon the sea,
The light of life on unbewildered eyes
A moment dawns, and in a moment dies.

So dimly glad may some lone heart recall
Perchance a magic end of evenfall,
When far on misty fells the moon has made
An argent fleece, and neither shine nor shade;
Hills beyond hills she silvers as she sails,
Hills beyond hills, and valleys in the vales;
Till they that float and watch her scarcely feel
The liquid darkness tremble at the keel,
Beholding scarce behold her, hardly dare
To look one look through that enchanted air,
Lest some unknown God should no longer hide
His glory from his creatures glorified,
Should shine too manifest, too soon display
To eyes that dream the immeasurable day.

Remember; I remember; hast not thou
Hours in the past more living than all life now?
One hour, perchance, that thro' the hush of fate
In shadowy veil came to thee consecrate,
Known without knowledge, felt without a name,—
And life brings other hours, but not the same?

This, then, was revelation; this shall be
Thy crown of youth and star of memory;
Strong in this strength the ennobled years shall run,
And life grow single and thy will be one;—
Ay, like great passages in order played
Shall changeful life grow one and unafraid;—
For these are one in many, and tho' sometimes
The bell-like melodising rings and rhymes,
And warbles such a whisper now and then,
Too sweet, and scarce endurable to men,
Yet on thro' all the tune returns the same,
Embattled resonance, a flooding flame,
And dies to live again, and wins, and still
Rules the great notes and sways them as it will:—
Thus let thy life thro' all adventure go,
And keep it masterful, and save it so;—
Not reared too separate nor lulled too long
By the incommunicable trance of song,
Nor over-amorous, nay, nor overset
Too sweetly by the fain and fond regret,
The after-thought of kisses, and the tear
For loves whom day disparts and dreams bring near.
Since what man is man knows not, but he knows
That his one will is like a trump that blows;—
While breath is in him it can clarion well,

Heaven-sweet, and heard above the roar of hell;
Ay, "Fate and Fear beneath his feet are thrown,
All Fears and Fates, and Hell's insatiate moan."

Then, Pisa, let thy sullen airs o'erhead
Lull that unaltering city of the dead;
Let swimming Arno, hushed at last like thee,
Draw to his doom and gather to the sea;
Fold upon fold let rainy evening roll,
And thy deep bells strike death upon the soul;—
There is a courage that from need began,
And grows with will, and is at last the man;
Which on thro' storm, thro' darkness, thro' despair,
Hopes, and will hope, and dares, and still can dare;
And this is Virtue; and thou canst not bind,
O Death, this "living spirit of the mind,"
Which "far aloof," the Roman verses say,
"Holds an unseen illimitable way;
Far, far aloof can sail with wings unfurled
Beyond the flaming rampire of the world."

1871-72.

SWEET SEVENTEEN

I KNEW a maid; her form and face
Were lily-slender, lily-fair;
Hers was a wild unconscious grace,
A ruddy-golden crown of hair.

Thro' those child-eyes unchecked, untamed,
The happy thoughts transparent flew,
Yet some pathetic touch had tamed
To gentler grey their Irish blue.

So from her oak a Dryad leant
To look, with wondering glance and gay,
Where Jove, uncrowned and kingly, went
With Maia down the woodland way.

Their glory lit the amorous air;
The golden touched the Olympian head;
But Zephyr o'er Cyllene bare
That secret the Immortals said.

The nymph they saw not, passing nigh;
She melted in her leafy screen;
But from the boughs that seemed to sigh
A dewdrop trembled on the green.

That nymph her oak for aye must hold;
The girl has life and hope, and she
Shall hear one day the secret told,
And roam herself in Arcady.

I see her still; her cheek aglow,
Her gaze upon the future bent;
As one who through the world will go
Beloved, bewitching, innocent.

Ah, no more questions, no more fears,
But let us at the end have rest;
Shed if thou wilt the unfallen tears,
But shed them on my breast.
Who guesses what the unfathomed years
May bear of life and love and woe?
Not in our eyes nor to our ears
Those things are plain to know.

We only feel that side by side
Each loving shoulder leans on each,
With looks too precious to divide
By fragmentary speech.
Nor this nor aught can long abide,
But passes, passes like to-day,
Till each shall fare without a guide
The uncompanioned way.

Who to the grave child-eyes could teach
Unknown Love's tremor and his play;
The silences that crown his speech,
His bitter-sweet and mourning way?

Thro' those dark deeps I saw him rise,
And stir the spirit's soft control,
And shake the imaged world that lies
Fair on the mirror of her soul.

How oft thro' woodlands undefiled
She rode amid the spring-tide's stir!
Fierce creatures at her touch were mild
And dumb things spake for love of her.

Then all at once her heart would beat,
And from her gaze the gladness died;
She drew the rein, before her feet
The sunset vales lay glorified.

Alone and ardent, fair and young,
O woman smit with woman's pain!
O song thro' all her being sung
Of Love delaying, Love in vain!

That voiceless passion Love had heard,
  Denied it strangely, strangely gave;
Sighed in a smile and sent my bird
  Bright-plumaged o'er the sundering wave.

As though the soul of all things wild,
  The soul of all things brave and free,
Came in the likeness of a child
  From tossing forests over-sea;

And softly to my bosom stole,
  And o'er my heart in freshness blew,
Until that living loving soul
  Became my life, my love anew.

ARETHUSA

O GENTLE rushing of the stainless stream,
Haunt of that maiden's dream!
O beech and sycamore, whose branches made
Her dear ancestral shade!
I call you praying; for she felt your power
In many an inward hour;
To many a wild despairing mood ye gave
Some help to heal or save,
And sang to heavenlier trances, long and long,
Your world-old undersong.
Now therefore, if ye may, one moment show
One look of long ago;
Create from waving sprays and tender dew
Her soft fair form anew;
From deepening azure of these August skies
Relume her ardent eyes!
Or if there may not from your sunlit aisle
Be born one flying smile,—
In all your multitudinous music heard
One whisper of one word,—
Then wrap me, forest, with thy blowing breath
In sleep, in peace, in death;
Bear me, swift stream, with immemorial stir,
To love, to God, to her.

AUF FLÜGELN DES GESANGES

Great dragon-flies in blazing blue
Across the shimmering river flew;
A dreamy fount of carol played
Thro' calm and ripple, shine and shade.

And all was joyous, all was fair,
Because the golden girl was there;
Her loving eyes illumed that day
The pine-clad winding waterway.

Until it seemed that charmed erelong
By incantation of her song
The broadening deep would flood and flow
From heights of Himalayan snow :—

Her face, in that enchanted hour,
Among the lotos-flowers a flower,
Her whisper mingling, tale for tale,
With roses in the Orient vale.

Then bloomy palms would wave and shed
Their magic slumber overhead,
And Ganges' everlasting stream
Sigh thro' the hushed and holy dream.

UNSATISFACTORY

" Have other lovers,—say, my love,—
Loved thus before to-day ? "—
" They may have, yes ! they may, my love ;
Not long ago they may."

" But though they worshipped thee, my love,
Thy maiden heart was free ? "—
" Don't ask too much of me, my love ;
Don't ask too much of me ! "

" Yet now 'tis you and I, my love,
Love's wings no more will fly ? "—
" If Love could never die, my love,
Our love should never die."

" For shame ! and is this so, my love,
And Love and I must go ? "—
" Indeed I do not know, my love ;
My life, I do not know."

" You will, you must be true, my love,
Nor look and love anew ! "—
" I'll see what I can do, my love ;
I'll see what I can do."

SATISFACTORY

1

" Do you remember, darling,
The mocking words you said,—
And snapt with fairy fingers
And shook your naughty head ?
And have you thought it over yet ?
And will my child be true ?
And has she loved me long enough
To know what she can do ? "—

2

" Oh I remember nothing,
Nor mocking words nor true,—
For I remember nothing
But you, but you, but you !
Forget the men that wooed me,—
I hate them,—let them go ;—
Forget the song I sang to you
That day I ' did not know ' !

3

" Ah ! not like this they wooed me,—
'Twas gamesome girl and boy ;—
Sometimes I half was willing
And often I was coy :
And this I took for love, dear,—
So little then I knew !
But now I smile to think I thought
Of any love but you.

4

" For *this* is quite a strange thing,
With *this* I cannot play ;
At a single look of yours, dear,
My spirit melts away ;
And body and soul are yours, dear,
I am you, I am not I,
And if you go I'll follow you,
And if you change, I'll die."—

5

" I've seen in a king's cabinet
Full many a carven toy ;
And Life the Psyche-butterfly
And Love the running boy ;
And Life the altar odorous
And Love the kindling flame,
And Life the lion amorous
Which Love was come to tame.

6

" But we from sard and sardonyx
Must grave us gems anew,
If we would have the legend
Tell truth for me and you !
For Love has caught the butterfly,
And Love has lit the fire,
And Love has led invincibly
His lion with the lyre."

" Oh never kiss me; stand apart;
My darling, come not near!
Be dear for ever to my heart,
But be not over-dear ! "

And while she spake her cheek was flame,
Her look was soft and wild ;
But when I kissed her, she became
No stronger than a child.—

Ah, love, what wilt thou then apart ?
Thy home is thus and here,—
For ever dearer to my heart,
And never over-dear.

HESIONE

In silence slept the mossy ground,
Forgetting bird and breeze;
In towering silence slept around
The Spanish chestnut-trees;
Their trailing blossom, feathery-fair,
Made heavy sweetness in the air.

All night she pondered, long and long,
Alone with lake and lawn;
She heard a soft untimely song,
But slept before the dawn:
When eyes no more can wake and weep,
A pensive wisdom comes with sleep.

"O love," she said, "O man of men,
O passionate and true!
Not once in all the years again
As once we did we do;
What need the dreadful end to tell?
We know it and we knew it well."

"O love," she said, "O king of kings,
My master and my joy,

Are we too young for bitter things
  Who still are girl and boy?
Too young we won, we cherish yet
That dolorous treasure of regret."

Then while so late the heavens delayed
  Their solemn trance to break,
Her sad desiring eyes were stayed
  Beyond the lucid lake;
She saw the grey-blue mountains stand,
Great guardians of the charmèd land.

Above her brows she wove and wound
  Her gold hellenic hair;
She stood like one whom kings have crowned
  And God has fashioned fair;—
So sweet on wakened eyes will gleam
The flying phantom of a dream.

Or so, inarched in veiling vine,
  The Syran priestess sees
Those amethystine straits enshrine
  The sleeping Cyclades;
For Delos' height is purple still,
The old unshaken holy hill.

" O love," she said, " tho' sin be sin,
  And woe be bitter woe,
Short-lived the hearts they house within,
  And they like those will go;—

The primal Beauty, first and fair,
Is evermore and everywhere.

" And when the faint and fading star
In early skies is sweet,
In silence thither from afar
Thy heart and mine shall meet;
Deep seas our winged desire shall know,
And lovely summer, lovely snow.

" And whensoever bards shall sing—
However saints shall pray—
Whatever sweet and happy thing
The painter brings to day,—
Their heavenly souls in heaven shall be,
And thou with these, and I with thee.

" And God,"—she said, and hushed a while,
" And God,"——but, half begun,
Thro' tears serener than a smile,
Her song beheld the sun:—
When souls no more can dream and pray,
Celestial hope will dawn with day.

NORA

I

O Nora knew it, Nora knows
How Love lies hidden in a rose,
And touches mingle, touches part
The trembling flames of heart and heart.

Thrice happy ! to have learnt that day
Her virginal bewitching way,
So airy-soft, so winning-wild,
Between the siren and the child.

O Nature's darling, pure and fair
From light foot to irradiant hair !
O Nora, Nora, bright and sweet
From clear brow to impetuous feet !

So glimmered wood and wave between
The starry presence of Undine,
In that first hour her bosom knew
What human hearts are born unto ;—

For half-enchanted, half-afraid,
The nymph became a mortal maid ;
A dewy light, a dear surprise,
Illumed her visionary eyes.

Then from their deeps a Spirit came ;—
Undine was other and the same ;—
For past resisting, past control,
Was very Love her very soul.

II

Last year, where mixed with many a rose
The gold laburnums wave,
A crimson rosebud Nora chose,
A bud my Nora gave.

And when the enchanting month anew
Revived the summer's boon,
And bright again the roses blew,
And all was joy and June,

A fair twin-bud for my delight
She from its cluster parts ;—
Here are the petals, red and white,
Shaped like two sister hearts.

And now because the maid is dear
And ways between us long,—
Because I cannot call her here
With sighing or with song,—

Across the ocean, swift and soon,
This faded petal goes,
To her who is herself as June,
And lovely, and a rose.

Though words of ice be spoken
And tears of fire be shed,
It seems Love's heart is broken,
And yet he is not dead:
Whate'er the wild voice utters
He breathes a still reply;
A bird he is; he flutters
And yet can never fly.

Unchecked he came, unbidden;
Unnamed, unknown, he grew;
He wove, unsought, unchidden,
His old, old charm anew;
And now, though tears upbraid him,
He smiles and has his way;
A god he is! we made him,
And yet we cannot slay.

PHYLLIS

O PAINTER, match an English bloom,
And give the head an English air,
Then with great grey-blue stars illume
That face pathetically fair.

As though some sweet child, dowered at will
With all the wisdom years could send,
Looked up and, like a baby still,
Became thine equal and thy friend;

And kept the childly curves, and grew
To woman's shape in wondrous wise,
And with soft passion filled anew
The sea-like sapphire of her eyes.

Look on her, painter; is there aught
Of well-beloved that is not here?
Could chance or art be guessed or taught
To make the lovely child more dear?

When summer even softly dies,
  When summer winds are free,
A thousand lamps, a thousand eyes,
  Shall glimmer in the sea :
O look how large, behind, below,
The lucid creatures glance and glow!
They strew with soft and fiery foam
Her streaming way from home to home.

So shines the deep, but high above,
  Beyond the cloudy bars,
The old infinity of love
  Looks silent from the stars :—
When parted friends no more avail
Those sleepless watchers shall not fail,
They learn her looks, they list her sighs
They love her soft beseeching eyes.

Then in the woman's heart is born
  The child's delight anew,
The Highland glory of the morn,
  The rowans bright with dew;
She hears the flooding stream that falls
By those ancestral castle-walls,
Her father's woods are tossing free
Between her and the southern sea.

Or lovely in a lovely place
  One offers as she stands
Sister to sister sweet embrace
  And hospitable hands;
White-robed as once in happy hours
She stood a rose among the flowers,
And heart to heart would speak and tell
The reason why we loved her well.

So in a dream the nights go by,
  So in a dream the days,
Till, when the good ship knows anigh
  The Asian waterways,
From home to home her love shall set
And hope be stronger than regret,
And rest renew and prayer control
Her sweet unblemishable soul.

The waves subside; she stems at last
  That Hellespontine stream;
Her ocean-dreams are overpast,—
  Or is this too a dream?
For child and husband, fast and fain,
Have clasped her in their arms again:—
Let only mothers murmur this,
How babe and mother clasp and kiss.

A CRY FROM THE STALLS

Beautiful darling!
Light of mine eyes!
Gay as the starling
Shoots thro' the skies;

Swift as the swallow, and
Soft as the dove;
Hopeless to follow, and
Maddening to love!

Ah when she dances! and
Ah when she sings!
Glamour of glances, and
Rush as of wings,—

Trill as of coming birds
Heard unaware,—
Poise as of humming-birds
Hanging in air!

Starriest, youthfullest
Flower of a face!
Who shall the truthfullest
Tell thee thy grace?

They comprehend it not,
They cannot know;—
Use it not, spend it not,
Spoil it not so!

While the world calls to thee
I sit apart,
I from the stalls to thee
Fling thee my heart!

Bright eyes to measure it!
Small hands to hold!
Take it and treasure it!
Lo, it is gold!

Stage-plays have ending, and
Love's ever new!
Stage-love's pretending, and
Now for the true!

Fame's voice be dumb to thee!
Fame's banner furled!
Come with me, come to the
End of the world!

THE BALLERINA'S PROGRESS, OR THE POETRY OF MOTION

Iri, decus coeli, quis te mihi nubibus actam ?—

I. The School

With mantling cheek, with palpitating
breast,
See the sweet novice glide among the rest !
O see her from those timorous shoulders fair
Fling back the tossing torrent of her hair !
See half diaphanous and half displayed
The shy limbs gleam, the magic of the maid !
Nor at first seeing wouldst thou deem it true
Such fairy feet such daring deeds could do,
Or Art inborn the maiden shame dispel
From those sweet eyes, that aspect lovable;—
Yet little by little, as in her ears begin
The thrill and scream of flute and violin,—
O little by little and in a wondrous way
The hid soul hearkens and the limbs obey;—
As though the starry nature, quenched and
hid
Between things impotent and things forbid,
Found thus an air and thus a passion, thus

Were crowned and culminant and amorous,
And dared the best and did it, and became
Vocal, a flying and irradiant flame.
Thus when the Pythian maid no more can bear
The god intolerable and thundering air,
Nor shifting colour and heaving heart contain
Longer the quenchless prophesying pain,—
The more she strives from out her breast to throw
The indwelling monarch of the lute and bow,
The more, the more will mastering Phœbus tire
Her proud lips frenetic and eyes of fire,
Till last, in Delphic measure, Delphic tone,
Bows the wild head, and speaks, and is his own.

II. The Stage

Then flame on flame the immense proscænium glows
With magic counterchange of gold and rose,
Then roar on roar, undying and again,
Crash the great bars of that prodigious strain,—
Fire flashed on fire and sound on thunder hurled
Bear from their midst the Wonder of the World.

Lightly she comes, as though no weight she
ware,
The very daughter and delight of air,—
Lightly she comes, preluding, lightly starts
The breathless rapture to a thousand hearts,
The high flutes hush to meet her, and the
drum
Thro' all his deep self trembles till she come:—
Then with a rush, as though the notes had
known
After long hope their empress and their own,
She and the music bound, and high and free
Thro' light and air the music leaps and she:—
So bright, so coruscating, Iris so
Slides the long arch of her effulgent bow;
Rose in her wake and azure on her way
A thousand tints bedew the Olympian day;—
She touches earth, and all those hues are one,
And her unbent bow springs into the sun.

I saw, I saw the lovely child,
I watched her by the way,
I learnt her gestures sweet and wild,
Her loving eyes and gay.

Her name ?—I heard not, nay, nor care,—
Enough it was for me
To find her innocently fair
And delicately free.

Oh cease and go ere dreams be done,
Nor trace the angel's birth,
Nor find the Paradisal one
A blossom of the earth !

Thus is it with our subtlest joys,—
How quick the soul's alarm !
How lightly deed or word destroys
That evanescent charm !

It comes unbidden, comes unbought,
Unfettered flees away,—
His swiftest and his sweetest thought
Can never poet say.

CYDIPPE

All-golden is her virgin head,
Her cheek a bloomy rose,
Carnation-bright the fluttering red
That o'er it softly flows,
But neither gem nor floweret vies
With that clear wonder of her eyes.

But twice hath hue like theirs been given
To be beheld of me,
And once 'twas in the twilight heaven,
Once in the summer sea ;
A yearning gladness thence was born,
A dream delightful and forlorn.

For once in heaven a single star
Lay in a light unknown,—
A tender tint, more lucid far
Than all that eve had shown,—
It seemed between the gold and grey
The far dawn of a faery day.

And once where ocean's depth divine
O'er silvern sands was hung,

Gleamed in the half-lit hyaline
The hope no song has sung,—
The memory of a world more fair
Than all our blazing wealth of air.

For dear though earthly days may flow,
Our dream is dearer yet ;—
How little is the life we know
To life that we forget !—
Till in a maiden's eyes we see
What once hath been, what still shall be.

LOVER'S SONG

I THANK thee, dear, for words that fleet,
For looks that long endure,
For all caresses simply sweet
And passionately pure ;

For blushes mutely understood,
For silence and for sighs,
For all the yearning womanhood
Of grey love-laden eyes.

Oh how in words to tell the rest ?
My bird, my child, my dove !
Behold I render best for best,
I bring thee love for love.

Oh give to God the love again
Which had from him its birth,—
Oh bless him, for he sent the twain
Together on the earth.

ANTE DIEM

" O seek not with untimely art
To ope the bud before it blows,
Bewitching from the folded heart
Reluctant petals of the rose !

" Too quickly cherished, quickly dear,
She came, the graceful child and gay,—
O leave her in her early year
Till April crimson into May !

" The golden sun shall glance and go,
Shall rest and tremble in her hair ;
Beside her cheek shall love to blow
The soft and kindly English air ;—

" O leave her glad with such caress,
In such embraces clasped and free,
Nor teach thy hasty heart to guess
The woman and the love to be."

Thus with myself my thoughts complain,
And so by night shall I be wise,
Till on my heart arise again
Her open and illumined eyes.

A moment then the past prevails
And in the man is manhood strong,
Then from the bruisèd soul exhales
The sweet and quivering flame of song.

Oh if indeed with time and tide
Too fast the changeful seasons flow,
And loving life from life divide
And shape and sunder as they go,—

Yet with what airy bonds I may
Her flying soul shall I retain,
And sometimes, dreaming in the day,
Shall see her, as she smiled, again:—

A girlish joy shall haunt the spot,
A presence shall illume the shade,
And unembraced and unforgot
Shall rise the vision of a maid.

Why should I strive to express it?
What should I care?
Ye will not know nor confess it
How she was fair.
Fades the song ere I begin it,
Falters and dies :—
Ah! had you seen her a minute,—
Looked in her eyes!

When she and I shall be lying
Dust at your feet,
Hours such as these shall be flying,
Life be as sweet,—
Women as lovely hereafter,
Tender and wise,
Born with her bloom and her laughter,—
Not with her eyes!

PRE-EXISTENCE

Once, and beyond recollection,
Once, ere the skies were unfurled,
These an immortal affection
Found at the birth of the world.
Earth was not yet, nor the golden
Vault of the dawn and the dew ;
These in a home unbeholden
Loved and were true.

Heard ye how each from the other
Drank interchangeable life ?
Call ye them sister or brother,
Husband, or lover, or wife ?
Names of an earthly affection
Are not so close or so dear ;
Spirits beyond recollection
Loved, and are here.

A SONG

The pouring music, soft and strong,
Some God within her soul has lit,
Her face is rosy with the song
And her grey eyes are sweet with it.

A woman so with singing fired,
Has earth a lovelier sight than this?
Oh he that looked had soon desired
Those lips to fasten with a kiss.

But let not him that race begin
Who seeks not toward its utmost goal;
Give me an hour for drinking in
Her fragrant and her early soul.

To happier hearts I leave the rest,
Who less and more than I shall know,
For me, world-weary, it is best
To listen for an hour and go:

To lift her hand, and press, and part,
And think upon her long and long,
And bear for ever in my heart
The tender traces of a song.

HONOUR

A MAN and woman together, a man and
woman apart,
In the stress of the soul's worst weather, the
anchorless ebb of the heart,
They can say to each other no longer, as
lovers were wont to say,
"Death is strong, but Love is stronger;
there is night and then there is day";
Their souls can whisper no more, "There is
better than sleep in the sod,
We await the ineffable shore, and between
us two there is God":
Nay now without hope or dream must true
friend sever from friend,
With the long years worse than they seem,
and nothingness black at the end:
And the darkness of death is upon her, the
light of his eyes is dim,
But Honour has spoken, Honour, enough
for her and for him.

Oh what shall he do with the vision, when
deep in the night it comes,
With soul and body's division, with tremor
of dreamland drums;

When his heart is broken and tender, and his whole soul rises and cries
For the soft waist swaying and slender, the child-like passionate eyes?
Or where shall she turn to deliver her life from the longing unrest,
When sweet sleep flies with a shiver, and her heart is alone in her breast?
It is hard, it is cruel upon her, her soft eyes glow and are dim,
But Honour has spoken, Honour, enough for her and for him.

I had guessed not, did I not know, that the spirit of man was so strong
To prefer irredeemable woe to the slightest shadow of wrong;
I had guessed not, had I not known, that twain in their last emprize,
Full-souled, and awake, and alone, with the whole world's love in their eyes,
With no faith in God to appal them, no fear of man in their breast,
With nothing but Honour to call them, could yet find Honour the best,—
Could stay the stream of the river and turn the tides of the sea,
Give back that gift to the giver, thine heart to the bosom of thee.

ELODIA

O SUDDEN heaven ! superb surprise !
O day to dream again !
O Spanish eyebrows, Spanish eyes,
Voice and allures of Spain !

No answering glance her glances seek,
Her smile no suitor knows ;
That lucid pallor of her cheek
Is lovelier than the rose ;—

But when she wakens, when she stirs,
And life and love begin,
How blaze those amorous eyes of hers,
And what a god within !

I watched her heart's arising strife,
Half eager, half afraid ;
I paused ; I would not wake to life
The tinted marble maid.

But starlike through my dreams shall go,
Pale, with a fiery train,
The Spanish glory, Spanish glow,
The passion which is Spain.

GABRIELLE

O SCARLET berries sunny-bright!
O lake alone and fair!
O castle roaring in the night
With blown Bohemian air!
O spirit-haunted forest, tell
The hidden heart of Gabrielle!

Ah, the superb and virgin face!
Ah once again to see
Transparent thro' the Austrian grace
The English purity!
To hear the English speech that fell
So soft and sweet from Gabrielle!

So best, but if it be not so
Yet am I well content
To think that all things yonder grow
Stately and innocent;
To dream of woods that whisper well,
And light, and peace, and Gabrielle.

ÉCHOS DU TEMPS PASSÉ

I

"Oh hush," I cried, "that thrilling voice,
That shepherd's plaint no more prolong,
Nor bid those happy loves rejoice
Thro' feigned rusticities of song!
Too soft a passion through thee sings,
Too yearning-sweet the phrases flow;
Too deep that music strikes, and brings
The tears of long ago.

2

"Ah! let me keep my frozen peace,
Forget with years the ardent boy,
And face the waking world, and cease
To dream of passion, dream of joy!
And yet this heart how strangely yearned!
How seemed the dream more true than day!
What flame was that which through me burned,
And burns, and fades away?"

3

But she, whose young blood softly stirred
Had bid the unconscious maiden sing,
Heart-whole, and simply as a bird
That feels the onset of the spring,—
She from mine eyes their secret drew,
Learnt from my lips the lover's tone,
And in my soul's confusion knew
The impulse of her own.

4

Who is herself my vision's truth,
Herself my heart's unknown desire,
Herself the hope that led my youth
With counterchange of cloud and fire;—
Then let her sing as Love has willed
Of mimic loves that die in air,—
A deeper strain my soul has filled,
Herself the music there.

THE RENEWAL OF YOUTH

ARGUMENT

THE poem opens with a recurrence to previous expressions of unrest and baffled inquiry into the problems of the unseen world (1—22). It is intimated that the present reflections are made from a point of view which gives their author a subjective satisfaction, though he expressly disclaims the power of conducting other minds to the same point (23—32). Since, however, many persons have attained, by various pathways, to some form of faith or peace, it is thought that they may be interested in a sketch of some of the feelings to which an assured hope of immortality gives rise (33—56). One of the simplest of such feelings is the impulse of enterprise and curiosity evoked by the hope of being ultimately able to explore the mysteries of the starry heavens (57—80). Yet it is plain that such investigations,—which may be carried to an inconceivable point even by men still living on our planet,—can afford no real insight into a spiritual world (81—92). The universe, as spiritually conceived, can be apprehended only by the development and elevation of the soul herself (93—106). Such spiritual apprehension may indeed be plausibly derided as imaginary, and compared to the search for San Borondon,—the Aprositus or "Unapproachable Island" of Ptolemy,—which under certain atmospheric conditions is still apparently visible from the Peak of Teneriffe, but which consists in reality of a bank of vapour (107—126). In reply to this, the difficulty of advancing adequate credentials for any announcement of spiritual discovery is fully admitted, but the analogy of the quest of San Borondon is met with the case of Columbus, who, starting himself also from the Canaries on an adventure in which few sympathized, discovered a real country (127—142). Men, however, who suppose themselves to discern spiritual verities must fully acquiesce in being con-

sidered dreamers (143—158). They do not look, in fact, for popular applause, but draw a peculiar delight from the interpenetration of the common scenes of life by their far-reaching memories, meditations, and hopes (159—202). Among these meditations the question of repeated existence on this planet, whether before or after our present life, naturally occurs (203—214). However this may be, death must be regarded as a deliverance, and life on earth as a tumult of sensations through which the main current of our spiritual being should run untroubled and strong, like a river through a clamorous city, or like Aeneas marching through the phantoms of the under-world (215—252). No exemption, indeed, can be promised from sorrow; but under the influence of these great hopes sorrow will be divested of its former bitterness, and felt to be directly educative (253—280). Nor, assuredly, could any conception of a future life be satisfactory which did not involve perpetual effort and consequent advance,—an advance whose ultimate goal seems to lie largely in an increased power of spiritually helping other souls (281—296). It need not be presumptuous to aspire to such developments, however remote from man's present insignificance, since the longest periods which astronomy can measure need bring no cessation to the upward efforts of the soul (297—308). In view of such high possibilities, a stern and thorough spiritual training is to be desired (309—318). A frequent experience shows that the stimulating influence of sorrows endured in common, or even of the separation of death, is usually needed to raise human love to the highest development of which earth admits (319—336). In like manner, all surrounding circumstances, of whatever kind, should be used as means of self-improvement. If they be uncongenial, they may be made to give stoical strength (337—344). And, on the other hand, artistic and emotional enjoyment, instead of alluring the soul earthwards, may stimulate her progress by suggesting the loftier delights to which she may in time rise (345—360). Art, indeed, in all its manifestations, seems directly to suggest an ideal world (361—364). This is true of Poetry (365—378), and of Painting,—as Tintoret's "Paradise" may serve to indicate (379—400). With Music this is markedly the case; for although, as in operas of Mozart's, Music gives full voice to human love, she also (especially in the hands of Beethoven) creates the impression that she is perpetually overpassing the range of definable, or

even of mundane, emotion (401—418). Nor does this impression seem referable to any purely subjective element in composer or auditor (419—430). It may rather be conceived as the necessary result of the position of Music as a representative of the laws and emotions of a supersensual world (431—446). Such Love, moreover, as can be experienced on earth is felt at its highest moments to be only an earnest of what may exist elsewhere (447—458). Nay, even if already felt as complete and satisfying, it must not limit its outlook to this life alone (459—470). Yet, on the other hand, the love felt on earth is truly sacred and permanent, and, as we may believe, will never be forgotten by the soul at any stage of advance (471—498). Finally, it is by maintaining life and love at a high degree of energy that we may hope to penetrate ever nearer to the central and divine life (499—518). And in the profound peace which even on earth may accompany this sense of progressive union with the divine, all personal fear and sorrow,—nay even the anguish of desolating bereavement,—may disappear in a childlike faith (519—548).

" Ah, could the soul, from all earth's loves set free,
Plunge once for all and sink them in the sea!
Then naked thence, re-risen and reborn,
Shine in the gold of some tempestuous morn,
With one at last to lead her, one to say—
Come hither, hither is thy warlike way!—
Oh that air's deep were thronged from heaven to hell
With shadowy shapes of barque and caravel,
On rays of sunset and on storms that roll
Swept to a last Trafalgar of the soul!"

Ah me! how oft have such wild words confessed
The impetuous urgence of a fierce unrest,

When all the embracing earth, the inarching blue,
Seemed the soul's cage no wings might battle through,
And Faith was dumb, or all her voices vain,
Against the incumbent night, the baffling pain;—
Dumb, till some mastering call, with broadened scope,
Should ring the evangel of authentic hope,—
Show the strong soul, aroused, alive, afar,
From death's pale peace delivered into war,—
Bid Life live on, nor Love disdain to sing
Mid fading boughs his anthems of the spring.

Nathless, my soul, if thou perchance hast heard,
I say not whence, some clear disposing word,—
If on thy gaze has oped, I say not where,
Brighter than day the light that was thy prayer,—
Thereon keep silence; who of men will heed
That secret which to thee is life indeed?
For if thou sing of woes and wandering, then
Plain tale is thine, and words well-known to men;
But if of hope and peace, then each alone
Must find that peace by pathways of his own.

Yet many are there who some glimpse have seen
From this world's cave of waters wide and green,
Who have striven as strive they might, and found their rest
Each in such faith as for each soul is best;—
To such thy message lies, nor needs inquire
What path has led them there where they desire;—
If in sweet trance it hath to some been given
To stand unharmed in the outmost porch of heaven,—
To have seen the flamy spires of mounting prayer,
Crowns of election hanging in the air,
And guardian souls, and whatso waits to bless
Man all unknowing in all his loneliness;—
Or if the Father for their need have sent
No separate call nor strange admonishment,
Only such hopes as in the spirit spring
With a new calm that brooks not questioning,
Such loves as lift the ennobled life away
From earth and baseness thro' their native day,
Such faith as shines, far-off and undefiled,
Guessed in the glad eyes of a stainless child.
For such as these find thou, my heart, a voice
With souls rejoicing gravely to rejoice,

For souls at peace obscurely to express
Gleams of the light which cheers their steadfastness.

Ah me, how oft shall morn's pellucid ray
Stir the high heart for the unknown wondrous way!
How oft shall evening's slant and crimson fire
Immix the earthly and divine desire!
What yearning falls from twilight's shadowy dome
For the unchanged city and the abiding home!
Yet chiefliest when alone the watcher sees
Thro' the clear void the sparkling Pleiades,
Or marks from the underworld Orion bring
His arms all gold, and night encompassing,—
With night's cold scent upon his soul is borne
Firewise a mystic longing and forlorn
To strike one stroke and in a moment know
Those hanging Pleiads, why they cluster so;—
Thro' night to God to feel his flight begun,
And see this sun a star, that star a sun.
How might one watch the inwoven battalions sweep,—
A dance of atoms,—drifting in the deep!
Ah, to what goal—firm-fixed or flying far—
Drives yon unhurrying undelaying star?

Thro' space, if space it be, past count or ken,—
Thro' time, if that be time, not marked of men,—
From what beginning, what fire-fountain hurled
Burst the bright streams, and every spark a world?

And yet, methinks, men still to be might learn
Whatever eye can fathom, sense discern,
Might note the ether's whirl, the atom's play,
The thousand secrets thronging on the ray,—
Till for that knowledge' sake they scarce could bear
Veilless the tingling incidence of air;—
And yet no nigher for all their wisdom grew
To the old world's life, and pulse that beats therethro',
While round them still, with every hour that rolls,
Swept some unnoted populace of souls,—
Undreamt-of lay, as ere earth's life began,
The open secret and the end of man.

O living Love, that art all lives in one!
Soul of all suns, and of all souls the sun!
Earth, that to chosen eyes canst still display
The untarnished glory of thy primal day;—

Blue deep of Heaven, for purged sight opening far
Beyond the extreme abysm and smallest star;—
By subtler sense must those that know thee know;
Thy secret enters with a larger flow;
On her own deeps must the soul's gaze begin
And her whole Cosmos lighten from within,—
Showing what once hath been, what aye must be,
Her Cause at once and End, her Source and Sea,—
Felt deeplier still, as still she soars the higher,
Her inmost Being, her unfulfilled Desire.

"Ah dreamers!" some will say, "whose wildered ken
Shapes in the mist a Hope denied to men!
Too happy! hard to find and hard to keep
Such mythic haven in the guideless deep!
Ye think ye find; and men there are who thus
Themselves the enchanted isle Aprositus
Have seen from Teneriffe; to them was known
The eastward shadow of its phantasmal cone,
And the blue promontory, and vale that fills
That interspace of visionary hills;—

They saw them plain ; yet all the while they wist
That San Borondon is but of the mist,
And such bold sailors as have thither prest
Come bootless back from the unrewarding quest ;
Or if, they say, they touch it, they are driven
Far forth by all the angered winds of heaven,
And nevermore win thither, nevermore
Tread with firm feet that legendary shore,
Retrack the confluent billows, or survey
From poop or prow the innavigable way."

Must then all quests be nought, all voyage vain,
All hopes the illusion of the whirling brain?
Or are there eyes beyond earth's veil that see,
Dreamers made strong to dream what is to be?
How should such prophet answer that his faith
Were in firm land and not a floating wraith?
What skill should judge him ? who to each assign
The secret calling and the sight divine?

Say, by what grace was to Columbus given
To have pierced the unanswering verge of seas and heaven,
To have wrung from winds that screamed and storms that fled

Their wilder voice than voices of the dead;
Left the dear isles by Zephyr overblown,
Hierro's haven and Teyde's towering cone,
And forth, with all airs willing and all ways new,
Sailed, till the blue Peak melted in the blue?

And these too, these whose visionary gaze
Haunts not those weltering crimsoned waterways,
Whose dream is not of summer and shining seas,
Ind, and the East, and lost Atlantides;—
Who are set wholly and of one will to win
Kingdoms the spirit knows but from within,—
Whose eyes discern that glory glimmering through
The old earth and heavens that scarcely veil the new;—
Let them say plainly; "Nay, we know not well
What words shall prove the tale we have to tell;
Either we cannot or we hardly dare
Breathe forth that vision into earthly air;
And if ye call us dreamers, dreamers then
Be we esteemed amid you waking men;
Hear us or hear not as ye choose; but we
Speak as we can, and are what we must be."

Nor much, in very sooth, shall these men need
The world's applausive smile or answering meed;
Whose impulse was not of themselves, nor came
With Phœbus' call and whispering touch of Fame,
But for no worth of theirs, and past their will,
Fell like the lightning on the naked hill.
To them the aspects of the heavens recall
Those strange and hurrying hours that were their all;
For to one heart her bliss came unaware
Under white cloudlets in a morning air;
Another mid the thundering tempest knew
Peace, and a wind that where it listed blew;
And oped the heaven of heavens one soul before
In life's mid crash and London's whirling roar;—
Ay, and transfigured in the dream divine
The thronged precinct of Park and Serpentine,
Till horse and rider were as shades that rode
From an unknown to an unknown abode,
And that grey mere, in mist that clung and curled,
Lay like a water of the spirit-world.

Or long will one in a great garden stray
Thro' sunlit hours of visionary day,
Till, in himself his spirit deepening far,
The things that are not be the things that are,
And all the scarlet flowers and tossing green
Seem the bright ghosts of what elsewhere hath been,
And the sun's gold phantasmal, ay, and he
A slumbering phantom who has yet to be.
Or one from Plato's page uplifts his head,
Dazed in that mastering parley of the dead,
Till at dark curfew thro' the latticed gloom
What presence feels he in his lonely room,
Where mid the writ words of the wise he stands
Like a strange ghost in many-peopled lands,
Or issuing in some columned cloister, sees
Thro' the barred squares the moon-enchanted trees;
Till, when his slow resounding steps have made
One silence with their echoes and the shade,
How can he tell if for the first time then
He paces thus those haunts of musing men,
Or once already, or often long ago,
In other lives he hath known them and shall know,
And re-incarnate, unremembering, tread
In the old same footsteps of himself long dead?

Ay, yet maybe must many an age have past
Ere on this old earth thou have looked thy last;
Oft shall again thy child-eyes opening see
A strange scene brought by flashes back to thee;
Full oft youth's fire shall leap thy veins within,
And many a passion stir thee, many a sin,
And many a spirit as yet unborn entwine
Love unimagined with new lives of thine,
Ere yet thou pass, with thy last form's last breath,
Through some irremeable gate of death,
And earth, with all her life, with all her lore,
Whirl on, of thee unseen for evermore.

Ah, welcome then that hour which bids thee lie
In anguish of thy last infirmity!
Welcome the toss for ease, the gasp for air,
The visage drawn, and Hippocratic stare;
Welcome the darkening dream, the lost control,
The sleep, the swoon, the arousal of the soul!

Stayed on such hope, what hinders thee to live
Meanwhile as they that less receive than give?
Short time thou tarriest; wherefore shouldst thou then

Envy, or fear, or vex thyself with men?
Only care thou that strong thy life and free
Inward and onward sweep into the sea;
That mid earth's dizzying pains thou quit thee well,
Whose worst is now, nor waits a darker hell.
So,—round his path their lair tho' Centaurs made,
Harpies, and Gorgons, and a Threefold Shade,—
Yet strove the Trojan on, nor cared to stay
For shapes phantasmal flown about his way;
But with sword sheathed in scorn, and heart possest
With the one following of the one behest,
Beheld at last that folk Elysian, where
Their own sun gilds their own profounder air,—
Found the wise Sire, and in the secret vale
Heard and returned an unambiguous tale.
Or so this ancient stream thro' London flows,
Her tumult round him gathering as he goes;
All day he bears the traffic, hears the strife,
Reflects the pageant of that changeful life;
Then day declines; men's hurrying deeds are done;
Falls the deep night, and all their fates are one;

Their hopes, their fears, a truce imperious keep;
Sorrows and joys are stilled at last to sleep;
From dark to dark the dim-lit river rolls,
A silent highway thro' that place of souls;
As if he only of all their myriads knew
What sea unseen all streams are travelling to,
And on swirled eddy and silent onset bare
That city's being between a dream and prayer.

Ay, thou shalt mourn, my friend, yet not as when
Thou hadst fain been blotted from the roll of men,
Fain that what night begat thee and what day bare
Might sweep to nothing in the abyss of air,
And the earth engulf and the ocean overflow
Thy stinging shame, the wildness of thy woe.
For now thine anguish suddenly oft shall cease,
Caught in the flow of thy perpetual peace,
Nor aught shall greatly trouble or long dismay
Thy soul forth-faring thro' the inward day,—
Strong in that sight, and fashioned to sustain
Gladly the purging sacrament of pain;—
Ay, to thank God, who in his heightening plan

Hath chosen to show thee the full fate of man;—
Who not in peace alone hath bid thee go,
But thro' gross darkness, and a wildering woe;
With all his storms hath vext thee, and opprest
With wild despair thy lonely and labouring breast;
Till there hath somewhat grown in thee so strong
That neither force nor fear nor woe nor wrong
Can check that inward onset, or can still
Thy heart's bold hope, thy soaring flame of will;—
Since thou hast guessed that on thy side have striven
A host unknown, and hierarchs of heaven;
With whom shalt *thou*, in lands unseen afar,
Renew thy youth and go again to war;—
Ay, when earth's folk are dust, earth's voices dumb,
From world to world shalt strive and overcome.

Say, could aught else content thee? which were best,
After so brief a battle an endless rest,
Or the ancient conflict rather to renew,

By the old deeds strengthened mightier deeds
to do,
Till all thou art, nay, all thou hast dreamed
to be
Proves thy mere root or embryon germ of
thee;—
Wherefrom thy great life passionately
springs,
Rocked by strange blasts and stormy tempest-
ings,
Yet still from shock and storm more steadfast
grown,
More one with other souls, yet more thine
own?—
Nay thro' those sufferings called and chosen
then
A very Demiurge of unborn men,—
A very Saviour, bending half divine
To souls who feel such woes as once were
thine;—
For these, perchance, some utmost fear to
brave,
Teach with thy truth, and with thy sorrows
save.

That hour may come when Earth no more
can keep
Tireless her year-long voyage thro' the deep;
Nay, when all planets, sucked and swept in
one,
Feed their rekindled solitary sun;—

Nay when all suns that shine, together hurled,
Crash in one infinite and lifeless world: —
Yet hold thou still, what worlds soe'er may roll,
Naught bear they with them master of the soul;
In all the eternal whirl, the cosmic stir,
All the eternal is akin to her;
She shall endure, and quicken, and live at last,
When all save souls has perished in the past.

And wouldst thou still thy hope's immenseness shun?
Shield from the storm thy soul's course scarce begun?
These shattering blows she shall not curse but bless;
How were she straitened with one pang the less!
Ah, try her, Powers! let many a heat distil
Her lucid essence from the insurgent ill;
Oh roughly, strongly work her bold increase!
Leave her not stagnant in a painless peace!
Nor let her, lulled in howso heavenly air,
Fold her brave pinions and forget to dare!

So thrives not Love; nor his great glory is shed
On thornless summers and a rosy bed;
Nor oft mid all things fair and full content
Soars he to rapture, blooms to ravishment;—

But even as Beauty is no vain image wrought
By man's mere senses or adventurous thought,
But founts austere maintain her lovesome youth,
And Beauty is the splendid bloom of Truth;—
So Love is Virtue's splendour; flame that starts
From the struck anvil of impassioned hearts;—
Who though sometimes their Paradisal care
Be but to till Life's field and leave it fair,—
For some sweet years charged only to prolong
Their lives' decline in new lives clear of wrong;—
Yet oftener these by sterner lessons taught
Shall know the hours when Love is all or naught,
When strong pains borne together and high deeds done,—
Ay, sundering Death by severance welds in one.

Thus be all life thy lesson; raised the higher
By whatsoe'er men scorn, or men desire;—
If lives untuned raise round thee a jarring voice,
Grieve thou for these, but for thyself rejoice;

Since fed by each strife won, each strenuous hour,
The strong soul grows; her patience ends in power;
And from the lowliest vale as lightly flown
As from a mount she soars and is alone.
Or thou, if all the arts their wealth have blent
To fashion some still home magnificent,
Wherein at eve thine heart is snared and tame
With lily odours and a glancing flame,
While sighs half-heard of women, and dim things fair,
Make the dusk magical and charm the air;—
If in that languorous calm thine ardours fade
And half-allured thy soul is half-betrayed,—
Yet with one thought shalt thou again be free,
Rapt in pure peace and inward ecstasy,
Since art and gold are but the shine and show
Of that true beauty which thy soul shall know;—
Ay, these things and things better shall she create
Of her own substance, in her glorious state,
When the unseen hope its visible end shall win
And her best house be builded from within.

For Art, the more she quickens, still the more
Must stretch her fair hands to the further shore,
Clearlier thro' fading images descry
Her fadeless home, and truth in phantasy.

Say, hast thou so known Art? hast felt her power
Leap in an instant, vanish in an hour?
Marked in her eyes those gleams auroral play
Mixt with this lumour of the worldly day?
Times have there been when all thy joys were naught
To the far following of a tameless thought?
When even the solid earth's foundations strong
Seemed but the fabric and the food of Song?—
In what world wert thou then? what spirit heard
That mounting cry which died upon a word?
Whence to thy soul that urgent answer came,
Force none of thine, and high hopes crowned with flame?
Which from thy lips fell slow, and lost the while
Their mystic radiance, momentary smile.

Yea, and unseen things round the Painter stand;
More than his eye directs the master-hand;
Dimly and bright, with rapture mixt and pain,
A heavenly image burns upon his brain;—
And many guessed it, but to one alone
God's house was open and His household known,—
Because the Lord had shown it him, and set
Such vision in the heart of Tintoret
That to his burning hurrying brush was given
Sphere beyond sphere the infinite of heaven;—
From light to light his leaping spirit flew,
The heaven of heavens was round him as he drew;—
Till clear-obscure in eddying circles lay
The golden folk, the inhabitants of day:—
Crowd all his walls, thro' all his canvas throng,
Those eyes enraptured in a silent song,
Hands of appeal, and starry brows that tell
A yearning joy, a wish inaudible.

So mounts the soul; so for her, mounting higher,
Is fresh apocalypse a fresh desire;
Vision is mystery, and Truth must still
By riddles teach, and as she fails fulfil.

And Music;—hast thou felt that how-
soe'er
Her mastering preludes march upon the
air,—
With whatso gladness her full stream she
flings
Tumultuous thro' the swirl of terrene
things,—
Though she awhile, when the airy notes
have flown,
Encompass all men's passion in her own,
Till "ye who know what thing Love is"
can see
His wings in the air vibrate enchantingly,—
Yet oftener, strangelier, are her accents
set
Toward hopes unfathomed thro' an unknown
regret;—
Ah listen! tremble! for no earthly fate
Knocks in that occult summons at the
gate;—
Hark! for that wild appeal, that fierce
acclaim
Cry to no earthly love with earthly flame;—
The august concent its joyaunce whirls
away
From thy soul's compass thro' the ideal
day;—
The lovely uplifted voice of girl or boy
Stirs the full heart with something strange
to joy.

Then hadst thou thought that still the Thracian sent
Thro' all the chords his infinite lament,
Because himself, the minstrel sire of song,
Had loved so passionately, mourned so long,
And taught his seven sweet strings a sighing tone,
And made their wail the answer of his own?
Or must thou deem 'twas but some Past of thine
Confused the stream of Music's cry divine,
Because her entering Orphic touch revealed
Shrines ruined now, bride-chambers shut and sealed,
And thrilling through thee a gleam unwonted shed
On loves long lost, and days immortal dead?
Not so, but Music is a creature bound,
A voice not ours, the imprisoned soul of sound,—
Who fain would bend down hither and find her part
In the strong passion of a hero's heart,
Or one great hour constrains herself to sing
Pastoral peace and waters wandering;—
Then hark how on a chord she is rapt and flown
To that true world thou seest not nor hast known

Nor speech of thine can her strange thought unfold,
The bars' wild beat, and ripple of running gold,
Since needs must she the unending story tell
Of such sweet mates as with her for ever dwell,
Of very Truth, and Beauty sole and fair,
And Wisdom, made the sun of all that air,
Where now thou art not, but shalt be soon, and thus
Scale her high home, and find her glorious.

And Love? thine heart imagined, it may be,
Himself the Immortal here had lodged with thee?
Thou hadst clomb the heaven and caught him in the air,
And clasped him close and felt that he was fair?—
He hath but shown thee, when thou call'dst him sweet,
His eyes' first glance, and shimmer of flying feet,—
He hath but spoken, on his ascending way,
One least word of the words he hath yet to say,—
Who in the true world his true home has made

With fair things first-begotten and undecayed,—
Whereof thou too art, whither thou too shalt go,
Live with Love's self, and what Love knows shalt know.

Ah sweet division, excellent debate
Between this flesh and that celestial state,
When Love, long-prayed, hath wrought thee now and here
Peace in some heart so innocently dear
That thought of more than what before thee lies
Seems a mere scorn of present Paradise;
While yet Love rests not so, nor bates his breath
To name the stingless names of Eld and Death;
Knowing, through change without thee and within
His force must grow and his great years begin;—
Knowing himself the mightiest, Death the call
To his high realm and house primordial.

Ah, may the heart grow ever, yet retain
All she hath once acquired of glorious gain!
May all in freshness in her deeps endure
Which once hath entered in of high and pure,
Nor the sweet Present's dearness wear away

The grace and power of the old God-given day!
Nay, as some world-wide race count most divine
Of all their temples one first lowly shrine,
Whereat the vow was pledged, the onset sworn,
Which swept their standards deep into the Morn,—
So, howsoe'er thy soul's fate bear her far
Thro' counterchanging heaven and avatar,
Still shall her gaze that earliest scene survey
Where eyes heroic taught the heavenly way,
Where hearts grew firm to hold the august desire
Though sea with sky, though earth were mixt with fire,—
Where o'er themselves they seized the high control,
Each at the calling of the comrade soul.
Ay, in God's presence set them, let them see
The lifting veil of the inmost mystery,
Even then shall they remember, even so
Shall the old thoughts rise, and the old love's fountain flow.

Ah Fate! what home soe'er be mine at last,
Save me some look, some image of the Past!
O'er deep-blue meres be dark cloud-shadows driven;

Veil and unveil a storm-swept sun in heaven;—
Cold gusts of raining summer bring me still
Dreamwise the wet scent of the ferny hill!

Live then and love; thro' life, thro' love is won
All thy fair Future shall have dared and done:
Whate'er the æons unimagined keep
Stored for thy trial in the viewless deep;—
Though thy sad path should lead thee unafraid
Lonely thro' age-long avenues of shade;—
Though in strange worlds, on many a ghostly morn,
Thy soul dishomed shall shudder and be forlorn;—
Yet with thee still the World-soul's onset goes;
Wind of the Spirit on all those waters blows;
Still in all lives a Presence inlier known
Is Light and Truth and all men's and thine own;
Still o'er thy hid soul brooding as a dove
With Love alone redeems the wounds of Love;
Still mid the wildering war, the eternal strife,
Bears for Life's ills the healing gift of Life.

Live thou and love! so best and only so
Can thy one soul into the One Soul flow,—
Can thy small life to Life's great centre flee,
And thou be nothing, and the Lord in thee.
And therefore whoso reaches, whoso knows
This ardent peace, this passionate repose,—
In whomsoe'er from the heart forth shall swell
The indwelling tide, the inborn Emmanuel,—
Their peace no kings, no warring worlds destroy,
No strangers intermeddle and mar their joy;
These lives can neither Alp on Alp upborne
Hurl from the Glooming or the Thundering Horn,
Nor Nile, uprisen with all his waters, stay
Their march aerial and irradiant way;—
Who are in God's hand, and round about them thrown
The light invisible of a land unknown;
Who are in God's hand; in quietness can wait
Age, pain, and death, and all that men call Fate:—
What matter if thou hold thy loved ones prest
Still with close arms upon thy yearning breast,
Or with purged eyes behold them hand in hand
Come in a vision from that lovely land,—

Or only with great heart and spirit sure
Deserve them and await them and endure;
Knowing well, no shocks that fall, no years that flee,
Can sunder God from these, or God from thee;
Nowise so far thy love from theirs can roam
As past the mansions of His endless home.

Hereat, my soul, go softly; not for long
Runs thy still hour from prime till evensong;
Come shine or storm, rejoice thee or endure,
Set is thy course and all thy haven is sure;
Nor guide be thine thro' halcyon seas or wild
Save the child's heart and trust as of the child.

POEMS FROM "FRAGMENTS OF PROSE AND POETRY"

[Published posthumously in 1904]

RETROSPECT

I

Alas, the darkened vault of day!
  The fading stars that shine no more!—
Alas, mine eyes that cloud with grey
  That beauty lucid as before!
Alone on some deserted shore,
  Forgetting happy hope, I stand,
And to my own sad self deplore
  The stillness of the empty land.

II

And I am he who long ago,—
  (How well my heart recalls it yet!)—
Beheld an early sun and low
  In fields I never shall forget;
The roses round were bright and wet
  And all the garden clear with dew,
In pleasant paths my steps were set
  And life was young and love was new.

III

How changed is this from that estate!
How vexed with unfamiliar fears!
And from that child more separate
Than friend from friend of other years,
Who strains quick sight and eager ears
Forgiveness from the dead to win,
But only sees the dark, and hears
A soundless echo of his sin.

VENICE

NEC ME MEA CURA FEFELLIT

Not vainly that Venetian Master set
'Twixt Doge and Doge the guardian Margaret
While from a soft and whirling glory smiled,
For Venice' sake, the Maiden with her Child,
And one great word the lords of Venice wist:—
"My peace be with Thee, Mark Evangelist!"—
Till for the grave enraptured kneeling man,
Grimani, or Priuli, or Loredan,
Thro' that clear vision fades, remotely fair,
The imperial City of all his earthly care,
Whose few last arches glimmer,—and all the rest
Whelmed in that thronging welcome of the Blest.

Ay, faithful heart! Thy saints were with thee then;
The race of angels is the race of men;

Their vanished light is on our vision shed,
Nor even their joy without us perfected;
Hold thou to these; on thee their grace shall flow;
They count thy coming and thy fates foreknow,—
Yea, as of old the deathless yearning share,
Love as of old, and as of old are fair.

How sleeps that City now! and far is fled
Her tale of fights outfought and Doges dead.
The flying Fames ring round her still; but she
Dreams in her melted Pearl of sky and sea.
For me too dreaming let the sunset fire
Shade the dark dome and pierce the pillared spire!
Let night and peace the cosmic promise pay,
And even the Soul's self dream into the day!

In dreams the heart is waking,
With dreams a dream she came,
The scattered dewdrops shaking
From hair that waved like flame.
O sweet! O woman-hearted!
O name I dare not say!
O face desired, departed,
And dreams that mock the day!

How many another maiden
I fain had loved again!
How sighed the heart o'er-laden
For rest and pause of pain!
O loves my Love forsaking,
Could these be tried or true?
I knew not always waking,
But when I dreamt I knew.

For still, 'mid fleeting fancies,
Herself, a vision, came;
The same aerial glances,
The woman-ways the same.
Alas, the waking lonely!
The hours that slowly roll!
That flying form was only
The shadow of her soul.

Ah, how could dreams discover
How dear a thing was this,—
No name of love or lover,
No thought of clasp or kiss:
But heart on heart was closing
As folded flowrets close,
And eyes on eyes reposing
Were dumb as rose with rose.

O Night! but send another
Of dreams that then I knew!
O sleep! thy true twin-brother
Must make the vision true!
Alas to find and choose her,—
To meet and miss her so!
Awake, awake to lose her,—
In dreams, in dreams to know!

O God, no proper place I see,
No work that I can do,
Myself I offer unto thee,
A sacrifice anew.

If Thou with clear sign from on high
Wilt mark me as Thine own,
How soon, how gladly would I die,
Unhonoured and unknown.

Thro' what new world, this happy hour,
What wild romance, what faery bower,
Are Nelly's fancies flown?
The dreamy eyes, the eager mind,
Of all imagined homes shall find
None sweeter than her own.

The best is truest; that was best
When Nelly, heart and soul at rest,
Knelt at the vesper-prayer;
No poet's dream, methought, could shed
O'er that unconscious childly head
So high a light and fair.

For innocence is Eden still;
Round the pure heart, the loving will,
Heaven's hosts encamped abide;
A Presence that I may not name
Thro' souls unknowing guilt or shame
Walks in the eventide.

DVM MEMOR IPSE MEI

" How clean forgotten, how remote and dead,
Those days and dreams that were of old so dear!
How lost and nought and wholly vanished
The prayers and joys, the passion and the fear!
O soul at gaze! as with sun-litten head
The emergent diver scans the darkling mere;
Or aëronaut descries and scorns outspread
On pigmy scale the enormous planisphere."
" Nay, nay," I cried,—" one streak of cinnabar,
One note of bird,—so waked the world for me!
O Life that listened, Love that called from far,
Man-heart that trembled at the bliss to be!
When earth's poor orb presaged the extremest star,—
Love from one drop divining all his sea."

ODE TO NATURE

I

O Mother gravely mild,
Soul of the waste and wild,
Behold me compassed in thine icy calm!
Athirst, alone, again
I call thee and complain;—
Here in thy temple raise my solitary psalm.

II

Athirst;—yet not as though
Thy fountains of the snow
Could quench me, raving headlong from the hill;
Let other longings cease
With plenty and with peace;
Athirst to the end is he whom only love can fill.

III

The light loves blush and bloom;
They perish; they perfume
A flying hour, and make a slight hurt whole:

What more than this might be
Hath heaven revealed to me
In secret long ago, in sabbaths of the soul.

IV

When winds the Alpine horn,
More than itself reborn
Peals in the magic answer of the hill;
Afresh, afar, afloat,
A new majestic note
From other lips is blown, in other airs is still.

V

Such was the love I sought;
So to the hidden thought
Might flash the unspoken answer of the eyes;
No need of kiss or speech
When, each inmixt in each,
Thy heart in hers will call, and hers in thine replies.

VI

O hope too fond and fair!
O angel in the air!
O dying dream, which yet to dream was joy!
Prayed longest, followed most
Of all that heavenly host
Who lured from child to man the vision-haunted boy.

VII

Sometimes the flying flame
Was Fortune and was Fame;
Thro' cloudy rifts a wildering clarion rang;—
Oftener an Orphic crown,
From deep heaven fluttering down,
Lit on a poet's head, and sweet the poet sang.

VIII

But first and last and best,
Most longed-for, least confest,
One form unknown descended as a dove;
Low in my soul I heard
One new melodious word,
And all the boy's frame trembled at the touch of Love.

IX

They melt, they fail, they fade,
Those shapes in air arrayed,—
Love with the rest; ah, Love, the heavenly friend!
Only this Mother mild,
Guileless as unbeguiled,
Here in her holy place endureth to the end.

X

O fast and flying shroud!
Cold Horns that cleave the cloud!
Uplifted Silence unaware of man!

Softlier, ye torrents, flow!
Slide softly, thundering snow!
Let all in darkness end, as darkly all began!

XI

Hence, hence I too had birth,
One soul with the ancient Earth,
Beyond this human ancestry of pain:—
My soul was even as ye;—
She was,—and she would be;—
O Earth, and Night, and Nought, enfold her
once again!

TO LADY MOUNT TEMPLE

State mixt with sweetness; all things chosen and fair
One aim subserving, swayed in one consent;
The fountain's glory with the sunshine's blent;
Silence, and Eden's spring-tide in the air;—
Yet 'mid all these a yearning guardian care
Continually on earth's waste places sent;
High hearts joy-brimmed, nor yet with joy content
Were aught unsoothed which saddest hearts may bear.—
Is this thine earthly house or heavenly goal,
Lady, which these poor words to paint have striven?
Nay, both; no vampires of the world control
That spirit's way to whom such wings are given;
The soul's own Prayer is answer for the soul;
Her Loves indwelling are her present Heaven.

ON A WINDOW IN DONINGTON CHURCH

" How blest, if they but knew it, how blest
are they,
The husbandmen, for whom the months
conspire,—
The springing seasons melt into the May,
The genial winter comes with feast and
fire!"—
More blest God's labourers, who day by day
From holier husbandry nor turn nor tire,
On whose sweet shepherding has fallen
alway
From heaven a satisfied and new desire.
All winter long their happy flocks they guide
Thro' pastures green, thro' vales tha
laugh and sing;
All winter long they pluck on every side
Fruit that endures and flowers not
withering;
For fields like theirs each month is harvest-
tide,
And for such sowers all the year is spring.

IAMQVE VALE

Dim in the moon wide-weltering Humber flowed;
Shone the rare lights on Humber's reaches low;
And *thou* wert waking where one lone light glowed
Whose love made all my bliss, whose woe my woe.
Borne as on Fate's own stream, from thine abode
I with that tide must journey sad and slow;
In that tall ship on Humber's heaving road
Dream for the night and with the morning go.

Yet thro' this lifelong dimness desolate,
O love, thy star within me fades not so;
On that lone light I gaze, and wondering wait
Since life we lost, if death be ours or no;
Yea, toward thee moving on the flood of Fate,
Dream for the night, but with the morn will go.

SLEEP

How greatly good to fall outspread
Full length at last upon my bed
  And bid the world farewell!
Without a sound, without a spark,
Immersed and drowned in pitchy dark
  And silence audible!

One living breath thro' the utter gloom,
Let pure Night's presence in the room
  Keep cool the voiceless hours:—
Black Night's inodorous airs austere,
More searching and more strongly dear
  Than Zephyr on the flowers!

Then from my wearied brain decay
The feverous fragments of the day,
  The thoughts that dance and die;
From life's exhausted cells they flow,
They throng and wander, whirl and go,
  And what is left am I.

There leave me softly to regain
The spent secretion of the brain
  From fountains darkly deep:
O come not! speak not! let me be,
Till from the heaven of heavens on me
  Descend the angel Sleep!

FEROR INGENTI CIRCUMDATA NOCTE

No sound or sight, no voice or vision came
When that fulfilled itself which was to be,—
The crash that whelmed mine inner world in flame
And rolled its rivers backward from the sea.
Nay, many a fjeld and fjord of ancient name
Lay that long night without one sign for me;
Gudvangen, Vossevangen, slept the same,
And dream was on the woods of Oiloë.

Yet surely once thou camest! and the whole
Dark deep of heaven sighed thy tale to tell;
Lost like Eurydice's thy spirit stole
Wildered between the forest and the fell;—
Only mine eyes were holden, and my soul
Too roughly tuned to feel thy last farewell.

FROM ALFRED DE MUSSET

I HAVE lost my life, I have lost my strength
And joy, and hope that lingered long,
And, losing all, have lost at length
The spirit and the pride of song.

How quickly spent a man's desire
Falls from the mistress of his youth!
And so I loved, and so I tire
Of my last mistress, ay, of Truth.

And yet she is immortal; they
Who, ere they know her, pass away,
Have wasted foolish years:
My God, Thy creature answers Thee;
One only good remains with me,—
The memory of tears.

Oh, when thro' all the crowd she came,
My child, my darling, glad and fair,
How seemed she like a flying flame
That parts at eve the dusk of air!
How leapt my heart, regarding there
Her ways in coming, softly fleet,
Her starry aspect, shining hair,
The light grace of her eager feet!

But when from those blue deeps divine
The tender glory quivering shone,
And her eyes' ardour met in mine
The love she loved to look upon;—
Then rainy mist or crowded floor
Became as heaven for her and me,
The London whirlwind, London roar,
As sighing of an enchanted sea.

O WAVING veil of shade and sun!
O dawns of dream and dew!
When life was high and heaven was one
With earth, and I with you!

When spring's primroses lit the wood,
Her hyacinths the glen,
And deep at heart we understood
The chief concerns of men:

For oft a fire from heaven will fall,
And oft the Soul replies,
And oft the unspoken Hope will call
From innocent blue eyes.

MADEIRA

How strangely on that haunted morn
Was from the West a vision born,
Madeira from the blue!
Sweet Heavens! how fairy-like and fair
Those headlands shaped themselves in air,
That magic mountain grew!

I clomb the hills; but where was gone
The illusion and the joy thereon,
The glamour and the gleam?
My nameless need I hardly wist,
And missing knew not what I missed,
Bewildered in a dream.

And then I found her; ah, and then
On amethystine glade and glen
The soft light shone anew;
On windless labyrinths of pine,
Seaward, and past the grey sea-line,
To isles beyond the view.

'Twas something pensive, 'twas a sense
Of solitude, of innocence,
Of bliss that once had been;—

Interpretress of earth and skies,
She looked with visionary eyes
The Spirit of the scene.

Oh not again, oh never more
I must assail the enchanted shore,
Nor these regrets destroy,
Which still my hidden heart possess
With dreams too dear for mournfulness,
Too vanishing for joy.

"FAERY LANDS FORLORN"

From Aalesund at midnight northward seen
Clear purple promontories fade in grey;
On Aalesund lies long the unearthly sheen
Of evening mixt with morning, day with day.
Ah, friend, beneath that heaven-high vault serene
What isles unnamed in gulfs unvoyaged lay!
How desolately calm those capes between
The slow wave swept the unending winding way!

Thence gazing awestruck in that pause of Fate,
My years, far from her, vision-like I viewed;
Unearthly calms, and hopes that wane and wait,
Life with one cold unchanging gleam imbued;—
Far firths of Sorrow spread disconsolate,
And Joy's low islets lit in solitude.

SILVIA

I

From calm beyond our inmost thought
Came the girl-spirit, childly-wise;
From spaces of the blue she brought
This earnest candour of her eyes;
From heavenly fields her soul uprose,
By fateful impulse urged to roam,—
Looked on the wheeling worlds, and chose
Our love her magnet, Earth her home.

II

Awhile, awhile these years shall flow,
In these soft limbs her soul be pent,
Till Earth the lore of love and woe
Hath taught, and left her innocent:
Then fairer yet, then yet more dear
We hold our child in surer stay;—
What else was Love that lit us *here*
But glimmering dawn of deathless day?

TO ALICE'S PICTURE

Unconscious child, fair pictured Phantasy!
More than thy song I from those lips have heard,
More than thy thought have guessed in look and word,
More than thyself mine eyes adore in thee!
Thou art the promise of Earth's joy to be,—
Days to our days by Fate how far preferred!
By stranger loveliness more softly stirred,
By purer passions taught tranquillity.

Nay, hoped I not thro' Death's swift-soaring ways
Mine own poor self some glory unknown to know,—
If, slowly darkening from delightful days,
I to mere night must gird myself and go,—
Then on thy face I should not dare to gaze
For wild rebellion and for yearning woe.

I

" Soul, that in some high world hast made
Pre-natal unbewailing choice,
Thro' Earth's perplexities of shade
Sternly to suffer and rejoice;—
Breathe in me too thine ardent aim;
Let me too seek thy soaring goal:—
However severed, still the same
My hope with thine, O kindred Soul!

II

" Yet pause. The roaring North has driven
Beyond our ken his foamy car;
Serener than the height of heaven
This summer sea lies near and far;
And flecked with flying shade and shine
Heaves a dove-green, dove-purple breast,
And shimmers to the soft sky-line
Thro' faery solitudes of rest.

III

" No fruit has Ocean's tumult found;
His wave-battalions blindly ran;—
Hushed after all that storm and sound
Old Ocean ends as he began:—

On *thee* no random angers fell;
Oh, not for naught thy skies were wild!
Thine Angel marked them, measuring well
The storms that should not slay his child.

IV

" Thine eager youth they could not dim;
They left thee slender, left thee fair;
Left the soft life of voice and limb,
The blue, the gold, of eyes, of hair.
Within a sterner change they wrought,—
Beset thy Will with surging wrong,
Smote on the citadels of Thought,
And found thee ready, left thee strong.

V

" Thy worst is over. Pause and hark!
Thine inmost Angel whispers clear,
' We leave the blackness and the dark;
The end is Love, the end is near.'
Lift then anew the lessening weight;
Fight on, to men and angels dear!
Fare forth, brave soul, from fate to fate;—
Yet ah—one moment linger here!"

GARDEN OF THE HESPERIDES

Would that a single sigh could fall
From lips so still so long,
Float o'er the sea and tell thee all,
More inwardly than song!

A breath enchanted and intense
From faint impassioned hours,
Hesperian with an odorous sense
Of Orotava's flowers!

On hair and eyes 'twould sink and rise,
Soft on thy lips would die,
And whisper in the speech of sighs,
"Oh wise one! thou and I!

"Not winds alone, my love, my own,
Not only sea disparts,
But Life and Fate, the loves too late,
The twin divided hearts.

"And day by day," the sigh would say,
With scarce surviving breath,
"Near and more near, a Form, a Fear:—
Oh darling, is it Death?"

When in late twilight slowly thou hast strayed
Thro' wet syringas and a black-green shade,
With one communing so, that each with each
Knew not the interludes of ebbing speech,
Marked not the gaze which thro' the dimness fell
On beauty in the daylight loved so well:—
Since in that hour the still souls held as nought
The body's beauty or brain's responsive thought,
Content to feel that life in life had grown
Separate no longer, but one life alone;
Ay, and they guessed thereby what life shall be
When Love world-wide has shown his mystery.

She wears her body like a veil,
And very life is shining through;
Her voice comes ringing on a gale
Of spirit-passion wild and new;
O soul without a mate or name,
Divine and mortal, maid and boy,
Shine out, and with a cry proclaim
The unguessed infinity of joy!

And all is over; and again I stand,
O Love, alone on our remembered strand!
And hills and waters all the dreamy day
Melt each in each thro' silvery haze and grey,
And Jaman takes the sunset, Jura knows
Beyond the liquid plains the morning rose.

Lake of the lone, the exiled, the oppressed,
What sighs have wandered o'er thy sea-blue breast!
What gaze has watched the suns that could not save
Flame from thy hills and fade upon thy wave!
Great men and fallen upon thy shores have shed
Their few slow tears for fame and fortune fled;
Sad men and wise have been content to see
In thy cold calm their last felicity.
And now thy sunlit vault, these walls of thine,
Seem an unroofed and angel-haunted shrine,
Fair as my love, bright with her vanished bloom,
Stilled with her woe and sacred as her tomb.

For here she stood, and here she spoke, and there
Raised her soft look thro' the evening's crimsoned air;
And all she looked was lovely; all she said
Simple, and sweet, and full of tears unshed;
And my soul sprang to meet her, and I knew
Dimly the hope we twain were called unto.

IN THE WOLSEY CHAPEL, WINDSOR

PRINCE well-beloved! true heart and presence fair!
High o'er the marble of thy carved repose
From Windsor's keep the Flag of England blows;
A thousand years float in the storied air.
There sleeps thy Sire; and often gently there
Comes one who mourns with steadfast eyes, and strows
The rhododendron round thee and the rose;
Love is her silence and her look is prayer.

Nor now that Banner's broad-flung triumphings,
Nor spirit whispering to the sons of kings
Of strong continuance, age-long empery;—
But that one woman's gaze the promise brings
To thee that sleepest of eternal things,
Realms yet unreached, and high love still to be.

O rock and torrent, lake and hill,
Halls of a home austerely still,
Remote and solemn view!
O valley, where the wanderer sees
Beyond that towering arch of trees
Helvellyn and the blue!

Great Nature! on our love was shed
From thine abiding goodlihead
Majestic fostering;
We wondered, half-afraid to own
In hardly-conscious hearts upgrown
So infinite a thing.

Within, without, whate'er hath been,
In cosmic deeps the immortal scene
Is mirrored, and shall last:—
Live the long looks, the woodland ways,
That twilight of enchanted days,—
The imperishable Past.

WIND, MOON, AND TIDES

Look when the clouds are blowing
And all the winds are free,
In fury of their going
They fall upon the sea:
But though their blast is frantic
And though the tempest raves
The deep immense Atlantic
Is still beneath the waves.

Then while the Zephyrs tarry,
Or when the frost is nigh,
The maiden none can marry
Will beckon from the sky:—
Then with a wild commotion,
Then with a rush and roar,
The whole enormous ocean
Is flung upon the shore.

SOLOMON

Stands the great king regarding as he stands
The bright perfected labour of his hands:
Then with no doubtful voice or trembling tone
Calls to the Presence he has made his own:
"All gold within and gilded
This house that I have builded,
It is ready for a king in his array:
Behind the curtain's hiding
The Highest is abiding;
We have found Him, He is with us from to-day."

But we grown wiser than the wise and made
For all our wisdom all the more afraid,—
Each man of each despairingly enquires
For God whom with despairing he desires:
"Have ye for all your duty
Beheld Him in His beauty?
Are there others who have known Him otherwhere?
The days around us darken,
He hears not nor will hearken,
He is gone into the infinite of air."

And thou too knew'st her, friend! thy lot hath been
To watch her climb thro' walnut-shadows green,
List in the woodways her light step, and see
On the airy Alp those eyes of Arcady.

I need not fear, then, 'twas my heart alone
Forged an enchanting image of its own;—
That starlight on the upland lawns had shed
Illusive rays about her starry head;—
That from those shadowed lakes in soft sunrise
I had drawn the depth, the blueness of her eyes;—
And dream was all her look, and whispering stir
Of winds in pines was all the voice of her.

Ah, when thou knew'st her, was her face still gay
With that child-wonder of her early day?
So Lippi's maiden angels softly drawn
On vistas daisy-gemmed of dewy lawn,

Stand with fair feet and rosy and rounded
bloom
By martyr's prison-house or Virgin's tomb;
Or, clasped in flying circlet, float and mix
Their lily-stems with thorn and crucifix;—
Yet on those sorrowing scenes their looks
are bent
Half unconcerned, and with a still content;
Since souls are these that have not yet been
born
To pain and passion of our earth forlorn,
Not yet have strayed from heaven, nor yet
they know
The upbuilding strength of life and love
and woe.
Thus heedless they their childly arts employ,
By their own being taught that the end is joy.

Then, when I last looked on her, her face
was still
As one on earth, but past all earthly ill;
One whose last tear was wept, sighed her
last sigh,
And dead already all that in *her* could die.

A CHILD OF THE AGE

I

Oh for a voice that in a single song
Could quiver with the hopes and moan the fears
And speak the speechless secret of the years,
And rise, and sink, and at the last be strong!
O for a trumpet call to stir the throng
Of doubtful fighting-men, whose eyes and ears
Watch till a banner in the east appears
And the skies ring that have been still so long!
O age of mine, if one could tune for thee
A marching music out of this thy woe!
If one could climb upon a hill and see
Thy gates of promise on the plain below,
And gaze a minute on the bliss to be
And knowing it be satisfied to know!

II

I thought to stand alone upon a height
Above the waters where my kinsmen lie;

I seemed to hear a promise in the night,
I dreamed I saw a dawning in the sky:
I said, "For you, for you, with keener sight,
I watch till on the waves the dawn be nigh":
I said, "While these men slumber, what delight
That we two should be waking, God and I!"
Ah me! the deathful waters climb and creep,
Far off the melancholy deep to deep
Murmurs a tidal infinite reply:
"Oh fool, oh foolish prodigal of sleep,
Remains, remains but with the waves to weep,
Or in the darkness with the dead to die."

What heart with waiting broken
Shall speak the word unspoken,
And who by tears betoken
The wisdom he has won?
Or say to him that grieveth,
"The hope thy soul believeth
Perchance, perchance, deceiveth,
But other hope is none.

"Ay, deep beyond thy telling
A bitter fount is welling,
Far off a bell is knelling
The ruin of thy youth:
Hide, hide the future's rising
With dreams and thin disguising,—
Can any man's devising
Be sadder than the truth?"

Then I with hope undying
Will rise and make replying,—
Will answer to his sighing
In speech that is a sigh:—
"The chains that fix and fetter,—
That chafe the soul and fret her,—
What man can know them better,
O brother-men, than I?

" And yet—my burden bearing,
The Five Wounds ever wearing,
I too in my despairing
Have seen Him as I say:
Gross darkness all around Him
Enwrapt Him and enwound Him,—
O late at night I found Him
And lost Him in the day.

" But bolder grown and braver
At sight of One to save her,
My soul no more shall waver
With wings no longer furled,
But, cut with one decision
From doubt and men's derision,
That sweet and vanished vision
Shall follow thro' the world."

SUNRISE

Look, O blinded eyes and burning,
Think, O heart amazed with yearning,
Is it yet beyond thine earning,
That delight that was thy all?—
Wilful eyes and undiscerning,
Heart ashamed of bitter learning,
It is flown beyond returning,
It is lost beyond recall.

Who with prayers has overtaken
Those glad hours when he would waken
To the sound of branches shaken
By an early song and wild,—
When the golden leaves would flicker,
And the loving thoughts come thicker,
And the thrill of life beat quicker
In the sweet heart of the child?

Yet my soul, tho' Thou forsake her,
Shall adore Thee, till Thou take her,
In the morning, O my Maker,
For Thine Oriflamme unfurled:

For the lambs beneath their mothers,
For the bliss that is another's,
For the beauty of my brothers,
For the wonder of the world.

From above us and from under,
In the ocean and the thunder,
Thou preludest to the wonder
Of the Paradise to be:
For a moment we may guess Thee
From Thy creatures that confess Thee
When the morn and even bless Thee,
And thy smile is on the sea.

Then from something seen or heard,
Whether forests softly stirred,
Or the speaking of a word,
Or the singing of a bird,
Cares and sorrows cease:
For a moment on the soul
Falls the rest that maketh whole,
Falls the endless peace.

O the hush from earth's annoys!
O the heaven, O the joys
Such as priest and singing-boys
Cannot sing or say!
There is no more pain and crying,
There is no more death and dying,
As for sorrow and for sighing,—
These shall flee away.

Oh stars in heaven that fade and flame,
Oh whispering waves below,
Was heaven or earth or I the same
A year, a year ago?

The stars here kept their home on high,
The waves their wonted flow,
The love is lost that once was I,
A year, a year ago.

I wailed as one who scarce can be forgiven,
But the good God had pity from afar,
And saw me desolate, and hung in heaven
The signal of a star.

BRIGHTON

I

Her brave sea-bulwarks builded strong
No tides uproot, no storms appal;
By sea-blown tamarisks the throng
Of idlers pace her broad sea-wall;
Rain-plashed the long-lit pavements gleam;
Still press the gay groups to and fro;
Dark midnight deepens; on they stream;
The wheels, the clattering horses go.

II

But that wave-limit close anear,
Which kissed at morn the children's play,
With dusk becomes a phantom fear,
Throws in the night a ghostly spray:—
O starless waste! remote despair!
Deep-weltering wildness, pulsing gloom!
As tho' the whole world's heart was there,
And all the whole world's heart a tomb.

III

Eternal sounds the waves' refrain;
"Eternal night,"—they moan and say,—

" Eternal peace, eternal pain,
Press close upon your dying day.
Who, who at once beyond the bound,
What world-worn soul will rise and flee,—
Leave the crude lights and clamorous sound,
And trust the darkness and the sea?"

HAROLD AT TWO YEARS OLD

Open your gates for him
Eager and new!
All the world waits for him;
What will he do?

Dear incompletenesses
Blossoming hours!
Feed him with sweetnesses!
Heap him with flowers!

See how he crumbles them,
Shouts like a man!
Tosses and tumbles them
Wide as he can!

Vain is admonishment,
Sermons in vain;—
Gleeful astonishment!
At it again!

Wildness of babyhood!
Passion of play!
Who but a gaby would
Wish it away?

Rapt from the Mystery,
Reft from the whole,
Hast thou a history,
Innocent soul!

Gaze we with wondering,
Baby, on thee;—
Sped o'er what sundering
Strait of the sea?

Borne to us hitherward,
Ah! from what shore?
Voyaging whitherward,
Child, evermore?

Little he'll tell for us!
Nothing he knows!
Clear like a bell for us
Laughs as he goes!

Powers supersensible
Breathe thro' the boy
Incomprehensible
Promise of joy!

ASHRIDGE

On this great home if change must fall,
Let change itself come soft and fair;
Leave these cloud-feathery skies, and all
The abandonment of upland air;
Leave ancient forest, ancient lawn,
Historic ash-trees, beechen shade;
Still let the slanted shafts of dawn
Light the low fern from glade to glade.

No more the Churchmen, sad and slow,
Chaunt in dim dusk their crooning song;
Nor captive queen thro' lattice low
Views a wild realm of wrath and wrong:
To these Inheritors belong
A sure dominion, master art;
For moat and wall they choose the strong
Ascendant of the nobler heart.

And if sometimes that heart should quail,
Half doubtful of high task begun;
Beholding hallowed landmarks fail,
Dear hopes evanish one by one;—

Yet best shall lead who best have led;—
Those thro' our chaos surest steer
Whose fathers' bygone deeds have bred
Imperious Honour, flouting Fear.

"By her own strength can Virtue live?
Self-poised can Hope wide-winging soar?"
List! for our deepening age shall give
Some answer surer than of yore;—
Stand fast, high hearts, thro' woe and weal;
Watch thro' the night, if watch ye may;
Wait, till the rifted heavens reveal
Unheard-of morning, mystic day.

Not even in death thou diest; so strong to save
Is He who walked unharmed the stormy wave;
Thy life from earth by hurrying surges driven
Wakes unbewildered in the courts of heaven;
Youth's bloom is flown; youth's fairer fruit up-stored
Is ripening in the garden of the Lord.

Let each alone with timely thought
Recall the days grown dim,
And ask those days whereby they brought
His happiness to him;

He finds it was not in the set
Delights resolved before,
Nor any eager wish, nor yet
The wish fulfilled and more,

But dreams he scarcely will confess,
And momentary play,
And unconsidered gleefulness
That sprang beside the way.

I

Love, they said, is faint and dying;
Love, they said, is worn and old,—
Chained with custom, bought with gold;—
Hark! I heard his voice replying,
"Though ye flout him, what are ye?
Love is master; Love is free!"

II

Love, they said, not long will linger,—
Slights his chosen, leaves his own;—
Woe's the heart whence Love has flown,
Touched in spring with autumn's finger!
—Nay, your doubts have done him wrong,
Love is deathless, Love is strong!

III

Love can bind with lightest tether
Heart to heart and soul to soul;—
Nay, what law but Love's control
Links our life and death together?—
Perfect Love has banished fear;
Love is heaven, and Love is here!

FREDERIC TEMPLE

I

Is there one man in disenchanted days
  Who yet has feet on earth and head in heaven?
  One viceroy yet to whom his King has given
The fire that kindles and the strength that sways?
Is there a wisdom whose extremest ways
  Lead upward still? for us who most have striven,
  Made wise too early and too late forgiven,
Our prudence palsies and our seeing slays.
We are dying; is there one alive and whole,
A hammer of the Lord, a simple soul,
  Man with the men and with the boys a boy?
We are barren; let a male and conquering voice
Fill us and quicken us and make rejoice,
  Even us who have so long forgotten joy.

II

And as I prayed, I heard him; harshly clear
Thro' the full house the loud vibration ran,
And in my soul responded the austere
And silent sympathy of man with man;
For as he spake I knew that God was near
Perfecting still the immemorial plan,
And once in Jewry and for ever here
Loves as He loved and ends what He began.
Wait, therefore, friends, rejoicing as ye wait
That 'mid faiths fallen and priests emasculate
For men to follow such a man should be;
To whom the waves shall witness with a roar,
Wild Marazion and Tintagel's shore,
And all the Cornish capes and Cornish sea.

IMMORTALITY

I

So when the old delight is born anew
And God re-animates the early bliss
Seems it not all as one first trembling kiss
Ere soul knew soul with whom she has to do?
" O nights how desolate, O days how few,
O death in life, if life be this, be this!
O weighed alone as one shall win or miss
The faint eternity which shines therethro'!
Lo all that age is as a speck of sand
Lost on the long beach when the tides are free,
And no man metes it in his hollow hand
Nor cares to ponder it, how small it be;
At ebb it lies forgotten on the land
And at full tide forgotten in the sea."

II

Yet in my hid soul must a voice reply
Which knows not which may seem the viler gain,

To sleep for ever or be born again,
The blank repose or drear eternity.
A solitary thing it were to die
So late begotten and so early slain,
With sweet life withered to a passing pain,
Till nothing anywhere should still be I.
Yet if for evermore I must convey
These weary senses thro' an endless day
And gaze on God with these exhausted eyes,
I fear that howsoe'er the seraphs play
My life shall not be theirs nor I as they,
But homeless in the heart of Paradise.

PALLIDA MORTE FUTURA

I

This is not shame in her courageous eyes,
Nor on those lids the glitter of a tear,—
Nay, but a rapt seclusion of surprise
After such woe to find an end so near:—
How lorn in heaven the hurrying winds arise!
How black the slow waves sway upon the pier!
On the edge of death her haunting memory flies,
And the utmost marvel has not place for fear.
O waves that ebb, O shadowy airs that err,
With you she speaks, with you she would confer,
Demanding dumbly what it is to die:
Yet hush ye winds, nor let the billows stir,
I with a single look shall answer her,
For death knows death and what she is am I.

II

For even so forlorn and so forsaken,
So shut and severed from all homes that are,
While in the vault the auroral glories waken,
False flames, and dying ere the morning star,
My soul in solitude her post has taken,
Between the two seas, on the narrowing bar,—
Sees on each hand the stormful waters shaken,
The twin Eternities unite afar.
There 'mid faiths slain and idols shattered low,
And many a fallen friend and fallen foe,
She waits by night the flooding tides to be;
And only to herself, and hushed, and slow,
Makes hidden melodies and wails her woe,
Till roar meet roar and sea be mixt with sea.

FROM BRUTE TO MAN

Through such fierce hours thy brute forefather won
Thy mounting hope, the adventure of the son:
Such pains astir his glooming heart within
That nameless Creature wandered from his kin;
Smote his broad breast, and, when the woods had rung
To bellowing preludes of that thunderous tongue,
With hopes half-born, with burning tears unshed,
Bowed low his terrible and lonely head;
With arms uncouth, with knees that scarce could kneel,
Upraised his speechless ultimate appeal;—
Ay, and heaven heard, and was with him, and gave
The gift that made him master and not slave;
Even in that stress and horror of his fate
His thronging cry came half articulate,
And some strange light, past knowing, past control,
Rose in his eyes, and shone, and was a soul.

A COSMIC HISTORY [1]

Come then, poor worm at war with Fate,—
(What inward Voice spake stern and low?)
Come, paltry Life importunate,
Enough of truth thou too shalt know;
Since man's self-stirred out-reaching thought
Hath seen in vision sights of awe;
Hath from a darker Sinai brought
Damnations of a vaster Law.

From dust, they told thee, man was born?—
The Cosmos' self from dust began,
In days that knew not eve nor morn,
Nor brooding Spirit nor breathing man;

[1] On the hypothesis here illustrated, the gradual aggregation of cosmic dust (practically known to us in the shape of meteoric stones and iron) forms comets and nebulae; the nebula of our solar system becomes a sun and planets; life appears on the cooling planets; and they are ultimately merged again in the sun. Higher beings than man are evolved elsewhere, presumably on large and slowly-cooling orbs; but although we men may imagine such beings as divine, they themselves recognise their powerlessness in face of a universe which is as inscrutable to them as to us. The suns of our stellar system crash together, evolve heat, and repeat the cosmic process; but ultimately lose heat into space and are agglomerated into one cold and dark mass, from which the last life disappears. A night of indefinite duration sets in—such as that imagined by Hindoo cosmogonists between successive self-manifestations of the universe; and in this night the cosmic dust alone is conceived as still speeding through infinite space.

See first-begot from Nought and Night
The gathering swarms, the flamy gale!
That cold, that low, that fitful light
Showed in the void an iron hail.

Then lone in space the comet hung;
Then waxed the whorls of cloudy glow;
Then each on other swept and swung
Enormous eddies, formless flow;
One Law, one Force and manifold,
Bestrewed high heaven with sparkling fire,
Burned in Orion's belt of gold,
And lit the Dragon and the Lyre.

Cooled the great orbs, and whirling flew
Their planet-offspring outward thrown;
On wheeling planets strangely blew
A breath unbidden and unknown;
No Mind creating watched alone,
Nor bade the emergent minds begin;
To weltering waters, senseless stone,
The seed of Life had entered in.

And first a glimmering ease they had,
And creatures bound in dream benign,
Obscurely sentient, blindly glad,
Felt the dim lust of shower and shine;
Then works the unresting Power, and lo!
In subtler chain those germs combine,
Thro' age-long struggle shaping slow
This trembling Self, this Soul of thine.

Rash striving into sad estate!
From anguished brutes the plaint began,
Sighed in man's soul articulate,
And breathes from Beings more than man;—
Ye have called them good, ye have called them great,
But whom have these for hope or prayer?
Nay, with what cry their end await
But silence and a God's despair?

Ye have called them gods, ye have called them kings;—
Too well their impotence they know,
Forth-gazing on the waste of things
With stern philosophies of woe:
Isled in their Sirius, Titan-strong,
They watch his warmth how slowly fail;
He fades, he freezes; long and long
Drives on the dead the iron hail.

Then all is silence; all in one
The exhausted orbs have crashed and sped;
Cold to the core is every sun,
And every heart that loved is dead:
The Night of Brahm lies deep and far,
The Night of Brahm, the enduring gloom;
One black, one solitary star,
The Cosmos is the cosmic tomb.

Nor yet thereby one whit destroyed,
Nor less for all that life's decay,
Thro' the utter darkness, utter void,
Sweeps the wild storm its ancient way:
Still fresh the stones on stones are hurled;
Their soulless armies shall not fail;—
Beyond the dooms of world and world
Drives in the night the iron hail.

A COSMIC OUTLOOK

I

Backward!—beyond this momentary woe!—
Thine was the world's dim dawn, the prime emprize;
Eternal æons gaze thro' these sad eyes,
And all the empyreal sphere hath shaped thee so.
Nay! all is living, all is plain to know!
This rock has drunk the ray from ancient skies;
Strike! and the sheen of that remote sunrise
Gleams in the marble's unforgetful glow.
Thus hath the cosmic light endured the same
Ere first that ray from Sun to Sirius flew;
Ay, and in heaven I heard the mystic Name
Sound, and a breathing of the Spirit blew;
Lit the long Past, bade shine the slumbering flame
And all the Cosmorama blaze anew.

II

Onward! thro' baffled hope, thro' bootless prayer,
With strength that sinks, with high task half begun,
Things great desired, things lamentable done,
Vows writ in water, blows that beat the air.
On! I have guessed the end; the end is fair.
Not with these weak limbs is thy last race run;
Not all thy vision sets with this low sun;
Not all thy spirit swoons in this despair.
Look how thine own soul, throned where all is well,
Smiles to regard thy days disconsolate;
Yea; since herself she wove the worldly spell,
Doomed thee for lofty gain to low estate;—
Sown with thy fall a seed of glory fell;
Thy heaven is in thee, and thy will thy fate.

III

Inward! ay, deeper far than love or scorn,
Deeper than bloom of virtue, stain of sin,
Rend thou the veil and pass alone within,

Stand naked there and feel thyself forlorn!
Nay! in what world, then, Spirit, wast thou
born?
Or to what World-Soul art thou entered
in?
Feel the Self fade, feel the great life
begin,
With Love re-rising in the cosmic morn.
The inward ardour yearns to the inmost
goal;
The endless goal is one with the endless
way;
From every gulf the tides of Being roll,
From every zenith burns the indwelling
day;
And life in Life has drowned thee and
soul in Soul;
And these are God, and thou thyself art
they.

TO THE QUEEN

I

To her beneath whose stedfast star
From pole to pole in lusty play,
Her English wander, forcing far
Their world-ingathering way;—
Outsoar the Cæsar's eagle flight,
Outrun the Macedonian reign,
Flash from the flamy Northern night
Speech to the Austral main;—

II

To her whose patient eyes have seen
Man's knowledge wax thro' ebb and flow,
Till some have felt these bars between
Wind of the Spirit blow;—
Tho' some, heart-worn with doubt and strife
Would bid the doomful thunder fall,
Bind as with hands the cosmic Life,
And dream the end of all:—

III

Beyond, beyond their wisdom's bound
Thro' fairer realms the Queen shall roam,
Till soul with soul the Wife hath found
Her mystic-wedded home:—
While her long-rumoured glories stir
The blue tide's earth-engirdling wave,
With love, with life, her Prince and her
The All-Father shield and save!

January 1898.

THE SAINT

And one there was whose face was softly set
To find the light which lighteneth from above,
Who in all anguish never should forget
The dear face of his love:
Nay, nor that hour, instinct with holy fear,
What time, but not with sleep, his eyes were dim,
While in the dead night, till the dawn was near,
She fought with God for him.
Yet how by thought her presence to renew?
What pale reflection of the glory fled?
To whom can I compare her? whereunto
Shall she be likened?

With such a look methinks in such a prayer,
On sacred walls the sweet Sebastian stands,
To cruel arrows offering his bare
White breast and holy hands:
Or so with earnest eyes and brow serene,
By some great painter grandly pictured,
S. Roderic the Martyr waits between
The living and the dead.

Yea, ere his feet have fallen or eye be dim
Stands the death-smitten saint, his service done:
And high from heaven an angel holds to him
The crown which he has won.

Or such a spirit theirs, nor yet forgot,
Of whom in simple speech their legends tell
That those weak virgins also chose their lot
In evil ages well:
Who in stern oath had terribly decreed,
If by all effort anywise they can,
With leaguered enterprise to intercede
For fallen fates of man:
Nor ever for a moment found they rest,
Nor sank at any time from fierce desire,
Not ever failed from some consuming breast
The flame of sacred fire:

But whether solemn chaunt they celebrate
To Father and to Son and Holy Ghost,
Or silently with settled eyes await
The showing of the Host:
Or whether sacred service of the dead
In mindful music carefully they keep,
Or haply on their eyes hath lightened
The short repose of sleep:

Always in sure succession night and day
Uplifting tireless hands before the throne,
One woman, strongly confident to pray,
Besought the Lord alone.

And one wail trembled thro' the holy trance,
And the same sigh thro' that enduring prayer:
"Have pity, O God! on Thine inheritance,
Christ my Redeemer, spare!"
Behold she prayeth: and the crimson beams
Of sad declining day have vanished soon,
And coldly clearly thro' the casement streams
The silence of the moon:
And sometimes ere the watch be wholly done
Her spirit swooneth for a little space,
And sometimes in her agony the nun
Hath fallen upon her face:

Yea, when the sense of earth is rapt and gone,—
No dream nor vision nor spirit nor any ghost,
A solemn Presence seems to light upon
The wafer of the Host.
Then surely from her trance she would not fall
Were bolts on thunderbolts about her hurled,
Nor in her ecstasy would heed at all
The blazing of the world:

But when the last, the day of days, shall come
And by strange hosts the space of air is trod,
And Christ the Lord descends to gather home
His saints, elect of God:
Then shalt Thou find that woman waiting there,
And with Thine own hands wake her wonderfully,
And lift her from her last most precious prayer
To Thee, my God, to Thee.

I KNEW a man in early days
Whom now I will not blame nor praise,
So dark his life, so foul his sin,
But such a human heart within.
Hard words to him I often said,
And would have killed, if words could kill,
But none the less, alive and dead,
I loved him, and I love him still.

OH fair and fleet with eager feet
The Greek his races ran,
Nor lost the boy his early joy
But triumphed into man:
Then tall and wise with graver eyes
He sought around, above,
Above, around, he sought and found
No sweeter thing than love.

O BEAR it, bear it, lonely heart,
As men have borne before;
A little while alive thou art,
And then shalt ache no more.

Behold I bear it as I may,
Mine eyes refuse me tears,
I suffer in a single day
The misery of years.

Down the deep vale, as one who dreamed,
Thro' the dim dusk I ran;
And strangely to myself I seemed
A God-forsaken man.

No human voice the valley knows,
No trump that calls the kine,
But thunder of the sliding snows
And silence of the pine.

So many vows, so many sighs,
So great delight forgot!
O answer, sweet accustomed eyes,—
Alas, they answered not.

O friend who hearest, hast thou known
The death that love can die?
And hast thou once been not alone,
And then alone as I?

In that still home, while Tyne went murmuring by
The old man's days were confident and calm,
Like organ-notes that close melodiously
The marches of a psalm.

Yet to the end it pleased him to dispense
The gathered harvest of a long increase,
From his wise words, benign intelligence,
And from his presence, peace.

And sometimes on his brow would seem to be
The hint and dawn of an immortal grace,
And some impalpable expectancy
Would settle in his face:

So standeth one by night whose purgèd ears
Hark for a secret which the stars shall tell,
So hears the wondering child, or scarcely hears,
The sighing of the shell.

O show us the arousal and uprise
Which crowns and pays the waiting of the past!
O Father, tell us if those wistful eyes
Are satisfied at last!

"They on the Lord that wait," He answereth,
"As mounting eagles shall their strength renew,
How safe the souls whom God encompasseth!
Their wants are very few."

Nay, would'st thou know her? let thine hid heart declare
Thine own most loved, most fair;
Call the dear dream, and from thy best divine
Dimly that best of mine;
List the still voice when votive Memory sings
Untold and holy things.
Remember how she looked that very day
Which stole thy soul away;
Think in her soft eyes what a glory grew
When love's first word was new.
Ah, friend, and was she lovely? seemed she then
The light and life of men?
Seemed she a creature from high heaven come down
For thine eternal crown?
Nay, canst thou feel it surely and know it well,
Without her heaven were hell,
And her one heart, whate'er God's heaven may be,
Were heaven enough for thee?

Friend, if such life hath beat thy breast within,
We have loved, we are akin.

THE GENESIS OF A MISSIONARY

Stung with the sharp pang of that evil day,
Too short occasion did all life afford,
If anywise at last he should repay
A white soul to the Lord.

Thenceforth to labour, strong in stedfast zeal
And faithful furtherance of a mighty plan,
In noble language labour to reveal
His Maker unto man:

"I with great violence have entered in,
Storm ye with force the golden gates of heaven:
Oh freed from agony! oh safe from sin!
I also am forgiven!"

Therefore on many a coast his cry was heard,
On many ears that earnest warning broke,
Yea, with his utterance he strangely stirred
The hearts of many folk:

Fast chained he kept them in divine surprise,
Deep things of God he wisely spake and well;
Strange glory on his face, but in his eyes
The memory of Hell.

A WHITE WITCH

I

Eyes that the morning star outshine,
Veiled with their arching shade!
Eyes from whose amorous deeps divine
Looks forth a stainless maid!
Eyes that the painter's art in vain
Erewhile had burnt upon my brain,—
No longer look on mine, or nevermore refrain!

II

Turn, turn that lustrous gaze away,
Enchantress innocent!
No angers in those lightnings play,
No willing bolts are sent;—
All childly-free those glances fly,—
Nor yet the less must droop and die
The heart lost unaware, and won unconsciously.

FINAL PERSEVERANCE

Say is it true that if a soul up-springing
Once,—for I know not nor it matters when,—
Plainly hath heard the seraphs at their singing,
Clearly hath looked upon the Light of men,—

Say ye that afterward tho' fast and faster
Downward she travel, daily she decline,
Marred with defeat and broken with disaster,
Filled with the earth, forgetting the divine,

Yet shall the fiend not utterly undo her,
Cannot constrain her living in the grave,—
God at the last shall know her as he knew her,
Come as he came and as he sought shall save?

Yes! tho' the darts exasperate and bloody
Fell on the fair side of Sebastian faint,
Think ye the round wounds and the gashes ruddy
Scar in God's house the beauty of the saint?

Who were the Lord to mock him and imprison,
Cheat with an endless agony of breath,
Bid him arise, and in his body risen
Carry the trouble and the pains of death ?

No ! if he wake it is a king's awaking,
Fresh from the night and fairer for his rest :
Aye and the soul, to resurrection breaking,
Springs in her flower and blossoms at her best.

Then tho' the man with struggle and with straining
Find not the faith and passion of the boy,
Yet shall he march upon the years remaining
Clad with a bitter and courageous joy ;—

Morn after morn renewing the endeavour,
Eve after eve regretting : it is vain !
Ah, the sea-snake ! a demi-god forever
Smote it and slew it and it was not slain.—

So, while the great deep round the king and under
Rose to the blowing, bellowed to the roar,
Fierce in the storm and fearless in the thunder
Sought he a sweet and visionary shore.

Once, as they say, in seeking it he found it,
Found in the sunset, lost it in the foam,
Westward and north and past it and around it
Fared in the homeless passion of a home.

Then with great heart amid the sailors craven
Spake he : " I leave you, be at rest again,
Sail without me for harbour and for haven,
Sail happy-hearted for your loves and Spain."

So to the waves he leapt, but ere his leaping
Cried, " Yet a hope! there is a hope for me,
Soon shall my *corse* upon that isle be sleeping,
Washed by the welter of the friendly sea."

FRIENDSHIP AND HOPE

Living and loved and delicate and lowly,
Rich in all blessing that thy God can send,
Take yet a gift, the simple and the holy
Gift of the faith and honour of a friend.

Sweet were the woods thro' which we went together,—
Gladly thou wentest and one glad with thee,—
Drowned in the glow and glory of the weather,
Kissed with the breath of summer and the sea.

There the great home, above the shadows sleeping,
Rises and reddens in the sunset-fires,
There the brave saint, a warrior-vigil keeping,
Crowns with his crest the forest of the spires.

Often the moon above the moorland gleaming
Lovely and silent on the mere shall shine,

Oft shall the sweet air thro' the twilight streaming
Moan in the sombre spaces of the pine.

Oh from the hush and dying of the splendour
Take thou a patience and a comfort then!
Oh let thine eyes be satisfied and tender,
Knowing the common brotherhood of men!

Children of God! and each as he is straying
Lights on his fellow with a soft surprise,
Hearkens, perchance, the whisper of his praying,
Catches the human answer of his eyes.

Then having met they speak and they remember
All are one family, their sire is one,
Cheers them with June and slays them with December,
Portions to each the shadow and the sun.

Therefore His children hold to one another,
Speak of a hope and tarry till the end,
Strong in the bond of sister and of brother,
Safe in the fellowship of friend and friend.

PRAYER

God, God, how oft in what assault of prayer
Must man subdue the soul and bend the knee,
How often in the infinite of air
Must hurl the litanies that cry for thee,
And look to heaven, and tell himself that there
No voice hath been and yet a voice shall be :—
O say how often, till the last despair
Seize him and madden, as it maddens me?
But who contends with God ? it is in vain :
How should a sinner of the Just complain?
From the Almighty shall a man be free?
Nay, till I die must I beseech again,
Yea, till I die the pulses of my pain
Beat with the flow and falling of the sea.

O God, how many years ago,
In homes how far away,
A people I shall never know
Have humbled them to pray!

Not once or twice we cry to thee,
Not once, or now and then,—
Wherever there is misery,
Wherever there are men.

O that the sorrowful joy, that the fears and the tumult of loving
All could have vent in the one passionate sigh of a prayer!
All that my tongue could pronounce, that my eyes and my tears could betoken,
All that could never be told, God, let me tell it to Thee!

I AM tired of all the years can give,
I am weary of all these things;
Tho' men should ask, I would not live
The life of seers or kings.

I care no more to learn or teach,
I love no more my breath,
And all but silence is my speech,
My life is all but death.

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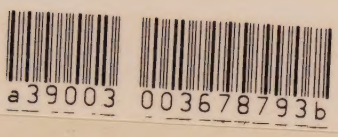
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